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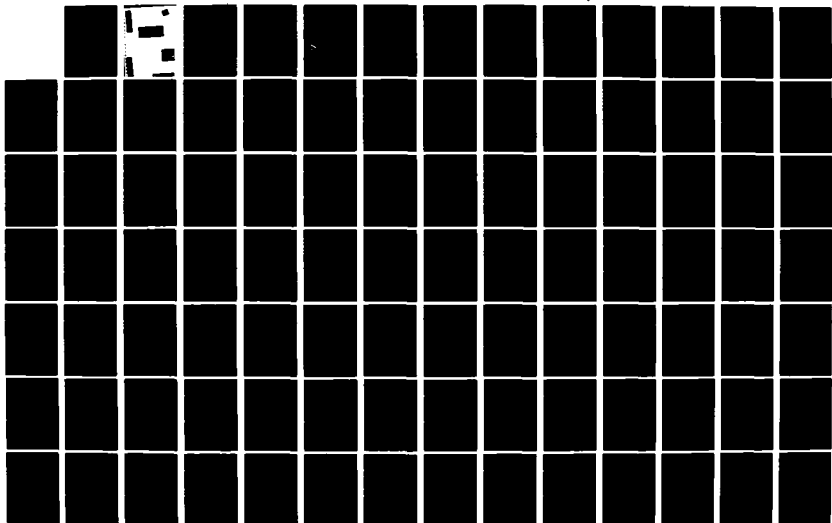
A MARKETING STUDY ON THE RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION OF  
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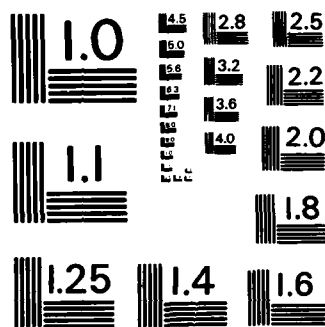
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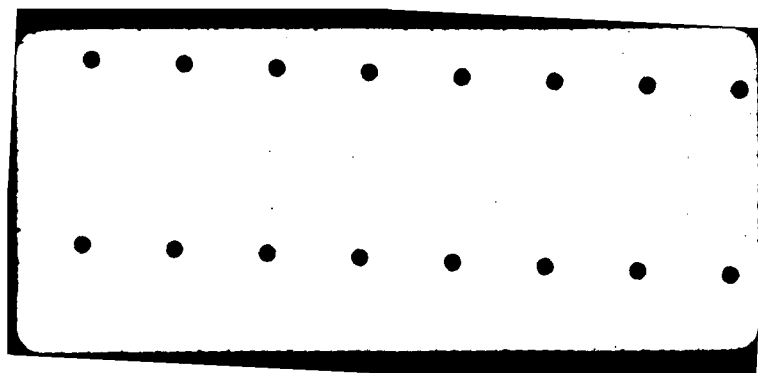
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Qualitative Research Summaries  
for  
A Marketing Study  
on  
The Recruitment and Retention  
of  
Black-American and Women Cadets

Contract Number DAAG 60-80-C-0224

Submitted to:

United States Military Academy  
West Point, New York 10996

Submitted by:

Market Facts, Inc.  
1750 K Street, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20006

~~January 31, 1981~~

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educational diversity within the Corps of Cadets. The present programs do not appear adequate to the task. This problem may be a prelude to more extensive recruiting problems of the mid-1980's."

In stating the problem, West Point stressed the relationship of retention programs as exemplified in the following statement:

"Retention of enrolled students must be a key consideration... The best place to recruit graduates is within the student body by retaining the maximum number of enrolled students."

West Point indicated that recruiting and retention are linked, because the Academy seeks to graduate commission officers, not simply to admit cadets.

The study was intended to accomplish these objectives:

- . To recommend goals for improving the enrollment of Black Americans and women through the Class of 1990.
- . To recommend programs or program improvements necessary to accomplishing the enrollment goals and greater retention of Black American and women cadets.

The final report is published in two parts. This first part includes the goal-setting discussion and detailed recommendations for improving recruitment and retention efforts in a number of areas. This document also contains suggestions for follow-on work in training, communications and marketing consultation, and the development of annual marketing plans. The executive summary provides highlights of the report. The second part of the report covers the advertising and communications portions of the study.

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The viewpoints that are presented in these summary reports are those of the interviewees and focus group participants and not those of the United States Military Academy or its contractor, Market Facts, Inc.



SECTION I

INTRODUCTION

The final report of "A Marketing Study on the Recruitment and Retention of Black-American and Women Cadets" is published in two parts. The recommendations in the report are supported by qualitative research conducted by Market Facts, Inc., during the 100-calendar day project for the United States Military Academy (USMA).

The two parts of the final report cover the following:

- Part 1 -- This section of the final report includes the executive summary, the introduction and background, the recommendations regarding programs and program improvements in the areas of recruitment and retention, and suggestions for follow-on contracts.
- Part 2 -- This section describes the advertising and communications evaluations and recommendations. Concept layouts are presented for advertising campaigns in print and direct mail media.

The qualitative research was conducted in the form of focus group discussions and in-depth interviews. Most of the research centered on the target markets as follows:

- Black males from military families
- Black males from non-military families
- Black females from military families
- Black females from non-military families
- White females from military families
- White females from non-military families

The military/non-military distinction was made because Market Facts hypothesized that a military predisposition would facilitate recruitment. The respondents were all high school students

in the top 25 percent of their classes and were considered potentially qualified for admission to West Point.

In conjunction with the investigation of the target markets, Market Facts conducted a number of focus groups with current cadets. The groups were assembled by class, sex and race variables.

In-depth interviews were conducted by telephone or in person with the following:

- Graduates
- Drop-outs
- Decliners
- Admissions officials at competitive institutions
- Liaison officers

The interviews with graduates, drop-outs and decliners were balanced between Black and female respondents.

Summary reports on the discussions and interviews follow. Topic outlines are included.

SECTION II

TARGET MARKET  
FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS

## BLACK HIGH SCHOOL MALES FROM CIVILIAN FAMILIES

A. Purpose of Interviews

To identify the key issues in the recruitment and retention of Black Americans and women, Market Facts conducted qualitative research in the form of focus groups and in-depth interviews. Such research was conducted with many types of respondents, including the Black male high school students from civilian families discussed in this summary report.

Such qualitative research is designed to identify the range of attitudes, opinions and ideas held by a particular type of respondent. The research is not intended to be a quantitative measure of the extent to which such attitudes may exist. Thus, the research should not be considered generalizable.

B. Description of Respondents

A focus group of high school sophomore and junior Black males from civilian families was conducted in Chicago, Illinois. These men were selected by their high school counselors because they ranked in the top 25 percent of their respective classes. The moderator used a discussion outline to direct questions and facilitate the discussion flow. The session lasted approximately two hours. (The outline is included at the end of this section.)

C. Career Orientation

The students' career interests focused on nuclear engineering, computer science and political science. These careers were perceived as being challenging, financially secure, and in the case of law, providing high status. Money was the primary motivation

in all cases. Law was viewed as being a stepping stone to a future in politics. In all cases, however, the respondents agreed that a person should chose something he or she would enjoy doing.

Parents and high school counselors were viewed as having the most influence in terms of career choice. However, the influences sometimes had a reverse affect as in the case of one student whose father insisted he become a doctor. The student perceived medicine to be boring and thus decided to go into law. Other influences included reading vocational literature about specific careers. One man mentioned the career aptitude test as helpful in formulating his decision to go into engineering. Counselors were perceived as being influential once the decision was made.

#### D. Military Career

The military was perceived as being a "last resort" as a career alternative. The students felt the military to be inflexible, too programmed, and as taking away an individual's freedom. The military was viewed positively as providing opportunities for travel and excellent benefits. In terms of career opportunities, the students felt excellent experience could be gained in the high technology fields because of the advanced machinery and equipment available. Long-term careers were viewed as static in that a person trained for something specific and had little opportunity to expand.

The respondents felt that women belonged in the military but with certain limitations. While they agreed there should be a balanced amount of responsibility between the two sexes, they differed in views regarding women's role in combat. Some felt that the women were physically capable of handling combat duty but mentally unprepared (i.e., panicking in some situations).

Others felt that women were more capable of enduring stress, while others felt men and women were equally capable of panicking in stressful situations. However, all agreed the individual, regardless of sexual differentiation, should be allowed the option of deciding to participate or not to participate.

Career opportunities for Blacks were viewed as 1) enlisting or 2) going to one of the service academies. While they felt some prejudice still existed in the service, most felt that progress had been made in the area of human relations.

#### E. Army as a Career Choice

When asked to rate the various branches of the service in terms of individual preferences, respondents fluctuated with regard to Navy, Air Force, and Marines. The Army was consistently rated lowest. There were several reasons for this attitude. First, the Army was perceived as being the least progressive in terms of attitudes toward minorities. One man stated, "They're more primitive in their attitudes on how to treat Blacks." Secondly, connotations of the Army elicited references to "blood and gore," "war and battle," "dirt and sweat." Lastly, the Army was perceived to be trying the hardest to recruit. The students gave descriptions of "men climbing ropes" and "jumping into trenches" which they had observed in magazine advertisements and recruiting posters. On the other hand, both the Navy and the Air Force elicited connotations of the leisurely life-- "cruising on a ship" or "flying a plane." The Marines were referred to as "all the boys." The respondents really had no concept of what members of these branches actually did but mentioned that they always appeared to be on leave somewhere. Thus, the Army was viewed as being least progressive in terms of attitudes and career alternatives.

While none of the Black males had started the actual application process to colleges and universities, they related firm ideas of places they intended to pursue. Such institutions included:

- Arizona State
- Ball State
- Columbia
- Cornell
- Louisiana State
- Northwestern
- Pepperdine
- Stanford
- Texas Christian
- UCLA

Most schools were selected primarily because of their academic programs. However, some were considered because of athletic scholarships available (e.g., tennis, in the case of one male). In addition, geographical location was an important factor. One man said, "I don't care as long as it's west." Financial considerations were always a factor. Social opportunities were important to some and completely irrelevant to others.

The respondents obtained their perceptions of individual colleges and universities from the following:

- Brochures
- Talks with friends/family attending the institutions
- Visits to institution
- High school recruiting sessions



They considered friends and family as providing the most valid information regarding the institutions.

Students did not seem to take advantage of the high school recruiting opportunities. While one student mentioned that his school attracted approximately two recruiters per week, he had only attended one session. Others mentioned that various institutions recruited at the high schools but they had not taken advantage of the opportunities. Only one student mentioned the military recruiters at his high school but was unable to remember which branch.

Parents exerted little influence on the respondent's choice of college. One respondent stated, "I have a free choice, as long as I do go to college." Another said, "Of course it has to meet the financial requirements, but other than that I have a free choice."

#### G. Service Academies

Most students had never considered the service academies as a viable alternative. One respondent mentioned that the Naval Academy had sent him a letter, but he didn't pursue it because, "You have to go through too many changes....the process is long.... it takes forever....plus there's a commitment....2-4 years I think." Generally, service academies were viewed as providing excellent opportunities if the student was a "disciplined person." However, the social life was perceived negatively in terms of not enough available women. The academies were comparable to other Ivy League schools in being "strict and competitive." The academies were held in high esteem by the general public because they made great officers.

With respect to the application process, only the student who had received the letter from the Naval Academy was aware of the

procedure (i.e., nomination, "free" education, etc.). The others hesitated and mentioned that the academies did not give athletic scholarships.

The service academies were viewed as being extremely restrictive (i.e., can't go off campus, no social life and highly regimented). While they agreed that academics should be "strict," they did not want to be a part of such an environment.

When questioned about the kinds of information they would seek in their research of a service academy, the students mentioned the following:

- How much hair has to be cut off
- The level of regimentation
- Available career alternatives
- In-depth explanations of all programs

They felt recruiters to be the best source of information, preferably students (cadets).

#### H. Summary

The following statements generally summarize the Black male students' attitudes and perceptions of careers and college:

- Careers
  - Desired careers in science
  - Financial stability is the primary attribute considered, followed by personal satisfaction derived from doing a certain job
  - Parents and high school counselors exert most influence on students

## I. Summary

The following statements generally summarize the Black male students' attitudes and perceptions of careers and colleges:

- Careers
  - Possessed well-defined career and career plans.
  - Careers included both science and art disciplines.
  - Challenge and versatility most important attributes; money relatively inconsequential.
  - Desire for family life important in career decision.
  - Parents are strongest influencers; teachers follow.
- Military career
  - Viewed benefits positively.
  - Opportunities for women in military viewed positively.
- College
  - Parents influencing students to attend their alma mater.
  - Attributes considered in comparing schools include prestige, location, post-education job placement.
- West Point
  - Strong awareness of West Point, its programs and requirements.
  - West Point attitudes toward women questionable.

- Military Career

- Perceived negatively in terms of inflexibility, programmed, and restrictiveness
- Perceived positively in terms of benefits provided (education, travel) and high technology careers available
- Army and Navy rated highest in rank order of branches
- Army viewed as least progressive in terms of attitudes and career alternatives

- Colleges

- Chosen for location, academic programs, athletic scholarship programs
- Parents exerted little influence on college choice

- Service Academies

- Little knowledge and awareness of service academy opportunities
- Students of academies provided most valid sources of information regarding campus life
- Questions about service academies revolved around career opportunities in service and levels of regimentation one would experience

## BLACK HIGH SCHOOL MALES FROM MILITARY FAMILIES

### A. Purpose of Interviews

To identify the key issues in the recruitment and retention of Black Americans and women, Market Facts conducted qualitative research in the form of focus groups and in-depth interviews. Such research was conducted with many types of respondents, including the Black male high school students from military families discussed in this summary report.

Such qualitative research is designed to identify the range of attitudes, opinions and ideas held by a particular type of respondent. The research is not intended to be a quantitative measure of the extent to which such attitudes may exist. Thus, the research should not be considered generalizable.

### B. Description of Respondents

In-depth interviews were conducted with several Black male high school students from military families. The respondents attended both public and private high schools. Most had either applied or intended to apply to the academies. Some also sought an ROTC scholarship. One of the students had a father who graduated from West Point.

### C. Career Awareness

The students were extremely career-oriented and had given serious consideration to their future careers from an early age (before high school). The chosen career fields included law, engineering and medicine. Most of the students indicated having undergone a series of changes with respect to their career choices.

Parents exerted a minimal amount of influence on the specific career choice. However, they did provide substantial feedback relative to the positive and negative features of various career alternatives. In addition, the students interfaced frequently on a social basis with friends of the parents and other professionals. These persons also provided resourceful information for the student in making his decision.

The attributes considered to be most important in choosing a career were the amount of challenge and the financial stability they provided. These attributes shared equal ranking for the top criteria. As one student stated, "I have to be happy in whatever I'm doing, but I also have to have money. If I don't have the money, then I'm not going to be happy." One student, who wanted to pursue a medical career, mentioned knowing an orthopedic surgeon who made \$400,000 per year. "Now that I could deal with," he commented. All had high expectations for making substantial salaries.

#### D. Military Careers

All of the students had considered a military career at some point during their lives. However, of those who intended to pursue careers in the military, not one indicated a long-term or life-long commitment. The ultimate goal was to achieve professional heights in the civilian sector.

Their perceptions of the achievement potential for Black officers varied. One student stated, "When you're a Black officer, you're not going to get that far . . . They don't really want to place you in positions of power when you're capable because of the risk involved . . . there are lots of political problems to deal with." His perceptions were based on his father's experiences in the Army.

E. College Awareness

The student's level of knowledge regarding college alternatives matched those of career options. The attributes used to compare colleges included:

- Reputation of the departments
- Athletic opportunities offered
- Social opportunities for Blacks
- Prestige
- Location

Most of the students were currently in the process of applying to various colleges and universities. The institutions included:

- Cornell University
- Duke University
- Harvard University
- Howard University
- Marquette University
- Moorhouse University
- Notre Dame University
- Pennsylvania State University
- University of California, Los Angeles
- University of Pennsylvania
- U.S. Military Academy

Surprisingly, some indicated a preference for not attending the Ivy League schools. They were turned off by the elitist attitude that prevailed and questioned the assumption that their academic programs were superior to those of other selective institutions.

#### F. West Point Awareness

Most of the students were well informed of West Point programs and admissions requirements and procedures. They knew about all of the admissions components (leadership, academic, athletic, physical, nomination). Moreover, some accurately assessed the levels of achievement required in quantitative terms. Generally, they felt self-confident about meeting the standards.

With respect to racial attitudes toward minorities at West Point, most indicated that they felt racial tension was not a major issue. While some prejudice may exist on an individual level, they felt the institution to be committed to fully integrating minorities into the Corps of Cadets. Some indicated dismay at the idea of West Point's filling quotas. One man said, "If that is true, they'll start snatching people from everywhere . . . that really irritates me." They questioned the status of social opportunities for Blacks at West Point, indicating that the lack of such opportunities would significantly influence their decision to attend.

One student talked about retention at the Academy. For students with strong military backgrounds like his, an appointment to West Point was not as big an honor as it was to those without such a background. For people like him, retention might be more difficult to maintain. He said, "If you already know about it, then you might have a problem staying, because it isn't all it's cracked up to be, but if you don't know about it, then it will probably meet your expectations."



G. Summary

The following statements generally summarize the Black male students' attitudes and perceptions of careers and colleges:

- Careers
  - Students were very career oriented.
  - Their career choices focused on the professions.
  - Highest ranked career attributes were challenge and financial stability.
  - High salaries were desired.
- Military Careers
  - Military careers were considered but civilian careers were preferred.
  - Some perceived a ceiling on opportunities for Blacks.
- College Awareness
  - Students were very college oriented and listed many choices.
  - Attributes used in comparing colleges included academic reputation, athletics and social opportunities.
- West Point Awareness
  - Students seemed well informed about admissions requirements and procedures.
  - Racial tension was not viewed as a major issue.
  - Students perceived West Point to be committed to integration.
  - The lack of social opportunities was perceived as a barrier.

## WHITE HIGH SCHOOL FEMALES FROM CIVILIAN FAMILIES

A. Purpose of Interviews

To identify the key issues in the recruitment and retention of Black Americans and women, Market Facts conducted qualitative research in the form of focus group and in-depth interviews. Such research was conducted with many types of respondents, including white female high school students from civilian families.

Such qualitative research is designed to identify the range of attitudes, opinions and ideas held by a particular type of respondent. The research is not intended to be a quantitative measure of the extent to which such attitudes may exist. Thus, the research should not be considered generalizable.

B. Description of Respondents

A focus group of sophomore and junior white female high school students from civilian families was conducted in Chicago, Illinois. These women were selected by their high school counselors because they ranked in the top 25 percent of their respective classes. The moderator used a discussion outline to direct questions and facilitate the discussion flow. The session lasted approximately two hours.

C. Career Orientation

The women interviewed were generally career-oriented. They had a vague idea of their specific career interests and definitely wanted to pursue higher education. Their perceptions of the different attributes of alternative careers were well formed. The following careers represented their choices: medicine (doctor and nurse), law and politics, psychology, and art.

In some cases students resented the pressure exerted by their high schools to define their career goals immediately. These high schools had a heavy orientation to college preparation and encouraged their students to take four years of English and four years of math and science. Some students felt these requirements to be excessive and unnecessary for their college plans.

In most cases, career plans were heavily influenced by family members. For example, one woman wanted to pursue law because her mother was currently taking classes in that field. Another had an aunt who encouraged her to go into nursing because of the present demand for nurses in the area. Yet another wanted to look into psychology because her sister was presently pursuing a degree in that field. However, some indicated that high school courses served as initial sources of influence (i.e., art, biology, etc.). High school counselors and teachers were not significant influences on the career decision process. Friends presently attending colleges were felt to have a dominant influence.

#### D. Career Choices

All respondents felt the most important attributes to consider in choosing among careers was the challenge and versatility a particular career provided. They felt the chosen career had to be something in which the individual really wanted to be involved. In most cases, money was not a primary motivator. As one woman stated, "Money's not that important... I just want enough to live on."

The ability to advance was the second most important attribute. Personal life was considered to be relevant only in the long term, primarily when talking about marriage and children. For example, the woman interested in a political career felt remaining in the public eye was important; the decision to have children would definitely alter that mode. She had not, of yet,

decided how to approach the problem, but would deal with the issue when making the decision became important. Others felt that marriage and children would not significantly affect their chosen careers.

The military, as a career alternative, was generally viewed negatively. Initial comments conveyed such attitudes as, "I wouldn't like to kill people" or "It's too restrictive." High school students who joined the military after graduation were assessed as "liking to fight... vicious... those who screw up in school... students who don't think they can handle anything else." "High school dropouts join the marines." Generally, they felt the military to be extremely regimented and to restrict personal freedom.

However, some women said that the benefits of serving in the military (i.e., housing, medical, travel) were appealing. They felt the military to be limited in offering a wide range of career disciplines. One woman who wanted to be a doctor said, "You can't use medicine unless there's a war." The consensus appeared to be that the women would not be able to use their abilities to any great extent.

With respect to women in the military, perceptions were fairly positive. They felt the service to be a "new frontier" for women wishing to serve. Some felt that being one of the first would be fun; these women had viewed "Women at West Point" on television. Others felt that proving themselves as women in a men's world would present a challenge. They felt that being a woman in the military was prestigious in that they were "looked up to." However, they also felt that a woman wishing to serve needed a lot of confidence and had to be a real "gutsy" type.

Generally, they felt the military to be genuine in its commitment to enlisting more women, but felt certain individuals were out to prove they weren't chauvinistic. One woman stated,

"It might cause some problems... because if a male fails, he loses to a woman." Most agreed, however, that the attitudes toward women were relevant only on an individual basis. In addition, they felt the inclusion of women in the military to be a big step but... "It takes a long time for people to change."

E. Time of Choice

College choices had not yet been made by these women. Although they were aware of college representatives coming to their respective schools to recruit, none had attended the sessions. However, they were extremely conscious of the criteria on which they would compare institutions.

The highest attributes were size and prestige. They wanted to attend a school that offered personalized instruction through a low student-teacher ratio; the school also had to have a good name. "Good name" was interpreted to be a school which was known to excel in its instruction of specific disciplines.

Cost was the next highest attribute, but most agreed that virtually all colleges had good financial aid programs for those who really wanted to attend. In addition, a high emphasis was placed on the social atmosphere (i.e., nice campus, variety of fraternities and sororities) and intercollegiate recognition.

Furthermore, they wanted to attend an institution that attracted a variety of people with versatile backgrounds and interests. The Ivy League schools were identified as being limited in this respect. For example, one woman stated, "Those schools are for the rich, smart and ambitious." Another added, "They're for rich snobs." Others felt them to be too scholastically oriented and extremely competitive. They agreed that college should be a time to enjoy oneself, in addition to working hard.

Service academies were viewed as offering a great deal of challenge. Some felt trying something new would be "fun" and that one could learn a great deal. Others felt the environment was too structured and rigid, making friends was difficult, and the experience would toughen one up a lot. Several of the women had viewed the film "Women at West Point" and felt the Academy provided an excellent opportunity for those who wanted to pursue such an alternative. They compared the academies to ROTC in terms of what actually transpired but were unsure of the exact nature of the organizations. For example, several indicated seeing people at their high schools with uniforms but didn't know exactly what they did. One woman stated, "You see them at special events all dressed up.....I think they have to take some kind of special test to get in.....They progress at different levels, but I'm not sure what they do."

Generally, the women felt service academics generally emphasized the military components and took a secondary stance toward educational achievement. They did not think the student had a choice of major; rather, the institution dictated the students' curriculum. They questioned the cost of attending. One thought an academy was free but wondered, "Don't you have an obligation to be in the military after that?" They had absolutely no knowledge of admission procedures or the nomination process. They did view the general education as being a stepping stone in acquiring a good job. One woman said, "The government would definitely want you because you're a good risk." In comparing service academies to other colleges and universities, the women agreed they could not be categorized. The academies were in a class of their own.

#### F. Information Needs

When questioned about the information they sought regarding different colleges, they mentioned the following:

- Picture of campus
- Description of departments
- Background of students
- Tuition
- Method of admission selection
- Open house opportunities

Almost all agreed that recruiters were not effective in providing information. They felt that recruiters could answer general questions but could not relay pertinent information. As one woman concluded, "After all, they're paid by the institution to promote it... naturally they're not going to say anything negative." None had actually attended any recruiting sessions, so this assessment is questionable. The most effective and accurate means by which to gather information was overwhelmingly decided to be a personal visit to the institution where they could individually talk to and interact with students.

#### G. Summary

The following statements generally summarize the white female students' attitudes and perceptions of careers and colleges:

- Careers
  - Women were moderately career-oriented.
  - Career decision heavily influenced by female members of family and friends.
  - Challenge and versatility considered to be most important attributes.
  - Family life important in long-run.

- Military
  - Military careers generally viewed negatively.
  - Felt benefits of military life are appealing.
  - Exhibited positive attitudes regarding women's opportunities in service.
- College
  - Low awareness of colleges and their programs.
  - Attributes considered important when comparing institutions include size, prestige, and cost.
- Service Academies
  - Felt that they provided challenge.
  - Perceived program to be too structured and rigid.
  - Perceived academies to emphasize military components over academic components of education.



## WHITE HIGH SCHOOL FEMALES FROM MILITARY FAMILIES

A. Purpose of Interviews

To identify the key issues in the recruitment and retention of Black Americans and women, Market Facts conducted qualitative research in the form of focus groups and in-depth interviews. Such research was conducted with many types of respondents, including the white female high school students from military families discussed in this summary report.

Such qualitative research is designed to identify the range of attitudes, opinions and ideas held by a particular type of respondent. The research is not intended to be a quantitative measure of the extent to which such attitudes may exist. Thus, the research should not be considered generalizable.

B. Description of Respondents

A focus group of sophomore and junior white female high school students from military families was conducted at West Springfield High School in Springfield, Virginia. These women were selected by their high school counselors because they ranked in top 25 percent of their respective classes. The moderator used a discussion outline to direct questions and facilitate the discussion flow. The session lasted approximately two hours. (The outline is included at the end of this section.)

C. Career Orientation

Generally, the women interviewed were extremely career-oriented. They had known since childhood what they wanted to do vocationally or at least realized that they would attend college and pursue a career. In addition, their perceptions of the different attributes of alternative careers were well formed.

The following career areas were preferred by these women:

- Accounting
- Art
- Biology
- Business
- Medicine
- Fashion design
- Music/art/journalism
- Education
- Veterinary medicine

The students jumped around in their career plans. For example, many women mentioned wanting as a child to be the traditional "mommy," "nurse" or "actress." However, by the time they had reached junior high school, their aspirations touched on law, medicine, business, science and art. Thus, early in their lifetime non-traditional careers presented realistic options. In many cases, parental careers (i.e., father-doctor, mother-lawyer, etc.) influenced the students' choices.

#### D. Career Choice

The attributes of career options varied in scope and importance. However, most respondents leaned toward engaging in a career that provided a creative challenge and versatility. In most cases, money was not a motivating factor. Financial security was interpreted to mean enough money to live on, not an excess of wealth. This finding was evidenced by comments such as, "I want to have enough money to provide for the essentials, but it's more important that I have a job that interests me," or "If you don't like your work, money won't mean anything."

In addition many students viewed their chosen field as offering great flexibility; they wanted to work in a free-lance mode or to have their own business.

Most of the students wanted to have a career, marriage and children. However, children were often viewed as being an interruption in a career. The respondents wanted to postpone children until a time when they could either afford to pay for their supervision or at a time when they were established firmly enough in their career to warrant flexibility in hours to look after the children.

Parents provided the primary source of influence, followed by teachers. Parents were viewed either as strongly encouraging specific careers or as assisting students in broadening their horizons. In addition, parents were viewed as knowing more about the student's personal and academic abilities, and as possessing the knowledge to assess accurately the student's potential for success in a given occupation. Teachers generally encouraged students to follow in their own chosen fields.

Several students discussed the value of career guidance tests. They strongly felt the tests to be of absolutely no assistance. One woman mentioned, "It seems that the test winds up telling you whatever you indicated your career preferences to be." Students may thus have a fairly accurate perception of what their skills and abilities are.

#### E. Military Career

Interestingly, at no time during the previous discussion did the students allude to the military as an alternative career choice. However, when questioned about the military as a possible option, reactions were fairly positive. The military was viewed as providing financial security, job stability, and

opportunities for travel and educational development. However, little conscious acknowledgment was given to the military as a career. Comments were directed more toward the benefits the military provides (i.e., free education travel, medical/dental benefits, housing, etc.). In one case the student stated, "If you can't do it on your own, the military will help you a lot." Another said, "The military provides great cultural opportunity. My family has traveled a lot and it's been great for me. I think I'm a better person for it." Many acknowledged this statement. However, some commented that they would never marry a man in the military because of the transient nature of their lives.

When prodded for comments on the military as a career opportunity, the students mentioned medical and engineering fields. One student said that Corps of Engineers provided an excellent opportunity. Another mentioned that her mother wanted her to be a doctor in the Army. Others suggested that the Army was flexible career-wise because there were many fields one could pursue.

Opportunities for women in the military were generally viewed positively. One woman suggested, "It's wide open for women." Another said, "It's a great opportunity - there might be some problems, but women can do anything the men can, sometimes better." The consensus of the group was that career-oriented women could achieve the same heights in the military as they could in a civilian environment.

#### F. College Choices

With respect to college alternatives, most students leaned toward institutions their parents had attended or schools that had strong reputations in their field or interest. Several of the parents had attended Stanford, MIT, Harvard and were influencing their children to follow accordingly. Two of the students had fathers who attended West Point, one of whom "pushed

my sister into going." Other institutions mentioned included Salem, Wake Forest, Bryant, Rider, University of Texas, and Cornell. Some mentioned researching colleges and universities near to home. Interestingly, while many of the students wanted to pursue educations at the prestigious private universities or colleges, including West Point and the other service academies, almost all felt that they had neither the requirements or aptitude to gain admission. Although all students interviewed were in the upper 25 percent of their respective classes, they conveyed an extremely low self-image in terms of their abilities and skills. Comments generally followed the lines of "I'd like to attend \_\_\_\_ ... but there's no way I could get in," or " \_\_\_\_ would be great because I know I'd have no trouble getting a job after college, but I don't stand a chance."

The criteria for evaluating strengths and weaknesses of various institutions included the following:

- Prestige
- Reputation of departments
- Geographic location (usually combined with financial considerations)
- Job placement

Parents exerted tremendous influence in choosing among options, more so than they appeared to execute with career choices.

#### G. Service Academies

The students possessed a strong awareness of West Point and the other service academies. In several cases, parents, specifically fathers, were recommending West Point as an alternative. West Point was perceived as providing an excellent education in all cases, specifically in the engineering field. However, feelings were hazy with respect to West Point's liberal arts program. West Point was viewed as being strongly discipline oriented. However, this perception was not necessarily assessed negatively.

Comments about the application process and perceptions regarding minimal requirements for entrance were varied. Most thought a GPA of 3.5 was essential for admission. Others felt that only the most academically oriented students (i.e., Rhodes scholars) were admissible. Some mentioned they thought an applicant also had to be athletically inclined and involved in a lot of sports. One student stated, "You know - they want the All American type ... football quarterback ... the whole bit."

Another perception that gained rapid acknowledgment in the affirmative was that a successful applicant had to have "connections." One woman posed the question, "Isn't it easier to get in if your Dad came from West Point?" Responses ranged from "I think it helps if you know someone" to "My sister went to West Point, and I think my other sister had an easier time when she applied."

#### H. Women at West Point

The issue of women at the academies provoked mixed emotions. Some felt that women cadets were basically accepted and were achieving as well as the male cadets. Others felt that there was some "prejudice" evident. One woman remarked, "The women want to be one of the guys ... the guys never go out with them." The woman with two sisters at West Point said both had some emotional problems adjusting and they were very lonely. She commented, "My older sister is more of a guy than a girl ... She wears make-up and stuff but when she comes home she's so different ... She acts like a guy, sits like a guy, talks

like a guy." Another woman who participated in a swim meet at the Naval Academy said that she got the impression they really did not want women there. One woman mentioned, "I have thought about applying but don't they make you cut off all your hair? I just don't understand why they make you do that. I refuse to cut off all my hair." However, the consensus was that West Point provided an excellent opportunity for a "free" education for women. Furthermore, status of the school was influential in obtaining jobs thereafter.

The programs at West Point which received the most attention from the women encompassed the academic, military (regimental) and leadership programs. The academic programs were viewed as being very difficult and stressful. "People are always falling asleep in class and they make them stand up" was the comment made by the woman whose sister attended West Point. Others mentioned the extreme discipline involved. While they could appreciate the discipline having been accustomed to the military, they felt inadequately prepared to deal with the kind of discipline they perceived to be evident at West Point.

In summary, the students felt that the requirements for entrance into West Point to be rigid. High GPAs, connections and a strong personality (i.e., good leaders, masculine traits) were essential. One woman remarked, "If you're a girl, you have to be a brute to get in ... but I guess it pays off in the end."

Some realized there was a period of commitment to the Army after graduation. The perceived length of time varied from two to five years. Most were aware of the nominations requirements and some of the physical aptitude exam, but no one specifically mentioned the medical exam or leadership aptitude evaluation.

## I. Summary

Following are highlights of the focus group discussions with white high school females from military families:

- Careers
  - Strong career orientation.
  - Challenge and versatility are key career attributes; money not a strong motivator.
  - Marriage, family and career combination sought.
  - Parents are primary influencers.
- Military
  - Positive attitudes toward benefits of military career.
  - Opportunities for women seen as positive.
- College
  - Parents sought to influence toward alma mater.
  - Reputation in field of interest is key attribute; also important are prestige, geographic location and job placement.
- Service Academies
  - Strong awareness of academies and quality of education.
  - Perceptions of inability to be accepted.
  - Perceptions that "connections" necessary for admission.
- Women at West Point
  - Some perception of sex discrimination.
  - Some perceptions of defemininitization.
  - Seen as excellent opportunity for "free" education and career development.



## BLACK HIGH SCHOOL FEMALES FROM CIVILIAN/MILITARY FAMILIES

A. Purpose of Interviews

To identify the key issues in the recruitment and retention of Black Americans and women, Market Facts conducted qualitative research in the form of focus groups and in-depth interviews. Such research was conducted with many types of respondents, including the Black female high school students from civilian and military families discussed in this summary report.

Such qualitative research is designed to identify the range of attitudes, opinions and ideas held by a particular type of respondent. The research is not intended to be a quantitative measure of the extent to which such attitudes may exist. Thus, the research should not be considered generalizable.

B. Description of Respondents

A focus group of sophomore and junior Black female high school students from civilian and military families was conducted at Immaculata Preparatory Academy in Washington, D.C. These women were selected by their high school counselors because they ranked in top 25 percent of their respective classes. The moderator used a discussion outline to direct questions and facilitate the discussion flow. The session lasted approximately two hours. (The outline is included at the end of this section.)

C. Awareness of Careers

The women generally exhibited a high level of awareness about careers. In addition, they had set realistic expectations for themselves with respect to choice of careers and choice of college institutions, and had developed firm ideas on how they would coordinate their careers and personal lives. Most of the

women came from homes where both parents were professionals and had set high expectations for their children. All of the women, with the exception of one, had decided what fields they wanted to pursue as career alternatives. The following disciplines were included:

- Army careerist (medicine)
- Business/finance
- Pediatrics/child psychology
- Veterinarian
- Psychologist
- Law
- Physician
- Electrical engineering
- Medical research - cancer
- Nursery teacher
- Pharmacist

In some cases, more than one career choice was mentioned. These women indicated a preference for one career, but decided to pursue another due to perceived academic deficiencies in math or science or after an appraisal of employment opportunities in the marketplace.

All the women contended that "challenge" should be the most important attribute to consider when choosing among career options. As a whole, they agreed that in realistic terms "financial stability" was essential but should not take precedence over the important criteria: challenge and liking one's work. One woman seemed embarrassed to state that she thought the opportunity to have a personal/family life affected her career choice. She added, "I would eventually like to have someone to share my life with, and when I ... we decide to have a family, that decision will definitely

change my career plans ... I guess I'd have to give a little!" This statement created substantial controversy. Several women in the group questioned her willingness to sacrifice her career at the expense of her husband's. One woman asked, "Why should you be willing to give up your career ... would he do the same for you?" Other women remarked that she shouldn't allow her husband the option of telling her what to do. Finally, one woman concluded, "Well, that's really for her to decide. She has to set her own priorities for what is important to her." The rest of the group nodded in agreement, and the subject was closed. One woman who wanted to be an attorney mentioned prestige as being an important attribute for her. She commented, "Lots of Blacks are lawyers, but I want to be a good lawyer, the best there is. People say it's not important what people think of you, but it is important. You can't survive by yourself, you need other people, so it's very important what others think of you."

Parents, especially mothers, served as the primary influencing agent for the women. Most of the women's mothers were professionals, and some encouraged their daughters to follow in their footsteps. For example, one mother, an attorney, encouraged her daughter to become a lawyer although the student's first preference was medicine. Another woman's mother simply wanted her to be happy and wealthy. Her father, however, wanted her to pursue law. Yet another mother wanted her daughter to go into the Army to obtain the educational and travel benefits the service provided.

#### D. Military Careers

The idea of military careers generated mixed perceptions and attitudes. The discussion began, without any prompting from the moderator, when one woman mentioned wanting to go into the Army. At first she received several shocked stares, but others slowly began to admit having considered the Army as a career at one time or another. The benefits provided by the Army attracted them the

most (i.e., travel, education, medical, etc.). In addition, they felt the aspect of discipline in the Army to be an extremely positive feature of the environment. They appreciated the concept of discipline as a positive influence on developing one's achievement potential. Furthermore, most of the women contended that career opportunities were expansive. They felt that any of the careers mentioned during the discussion could be used in the Army. The Army was perceived negatively in the following respects:

- Lack of freedom; inability to control one's destiny
- Lack of individuality; inability to express one's self to the fullest

These perceptions were derived from numerous sources, including:

- Family (parents, sisters, uncles)
- Friends (in service or at academies)
- Personal experiences (visiting West Point, working on Army base)
- Literative reviews (magazine, newspaper articles)

These sources were heavily relied on as accurate sources of information. Six of the eight women had fathers who had served in the military at some point during their lives although none was presently active. One woman had a mother who worked for the Army.

The students generally felt that women possessed the potential for high achievement in the Army and could be extremely productive. However, they did not perceive the institution to be genuinely committed to integrating women into the organization. They felt men were extremely hostile in their attitudes because women were "moving in on their turf," but felt the hostility to be no different in the civilian sector. The new policies instituted were regarded merely as "token gestures." This same attitude encompassed the integration of Blacks in the Army. One woman

indicated she had read several articles on the high drop out rate of Army personnel which led her to question its effectiveness in ensuring equal treatment for all. Another woman stated, "The Army is one of the oldest and most traditional institutions in the nation, but it must change a bit to reflect the times."

When assigned the task of rating the different branches of the service, Air Force was consistently rated as the top choice. The women attributed its appeal to flying, possessing the ability to advance personnel quickly through the ranks and providing many opportunities for furthering one's career and education. The Army, Navy, and Marines tied for second place. The Navy was envisioned as providing many opportunities for travel on ships. One woman quoted the Navy jingle. The Marines were viewed as sustaining long absences from home and having to go through a horrendous boot camp training. The Army brought to mind visions of tanks, shooting and the television sit-com, "MASH."

#### E. College Awareness

The women included the following list of colleges and universities in their set of college alternatives:

- Brown University
- Georgetown University
- Howard University
- Louisiana State University
- Tufts University
- Tuskegee Institute
- University of Maryland
- University of Virginia
- University of West Virginia
- United States Air Force Academy

- United States Military Academy
- United States Naval Academy

The following attributes were used to compare the institutions:

- Distance from home (most wanted to maximize that distance)
- Prestige of department programs
- Location (preferably in or near urban setting)
- Distribution of Blacks in environment
- Distribution of males in environment
- Liberal arts program (variety of majors offered)

One woman indicated a strong preference for attending non-religious institutions. Many were considering the Black colleges and universities as viable options. The service academies were also included and some had already written for information from the schools.

Knowledge of the admissions process varied from student to student. Some thought academics and the nomination to be the only selective criteria. Others included being active in the community and having a strong athletic ability as essential ingredients. Several women had visited West Point and the Naval Academy on guided tours. Almost all of the women knew of the commitment although they were unclear about the length. They perceived the term to be from two to five years.

#### F. General Characteristics

Several distinctive characteristics of this group relative to other high school focus groups were manifested. First, evidence of a very strong support system among the women was detected. The guidance counselor later verified this perception, and said that the system was characteristic of all the women at the school due to the nature of the environment.

Secondly, the women exhibited a very high positive self-image, especially in relation to their expectations for future achievement. One woman said, "I want to go into law because I know I'll be good. I'm aggressive and motivated and that's what it takes to be good." Another woman who wanted to pursue psychology stated, "I wanted to go into psychology, but I'm really stronger in sales ... I can sell anything ... it doesn't matter what it is." Yet another who wanted to be an attorney declared, "I'm a great speaker and law would definitely be a challenge." Generally, all the women demonstrated substantial motivation and were extremely achievement oriented.

Finally, several, of the women included past employment experiences as having a significant effect on their career decision process. One woman who initially wanted to pursue a military career worked at an Army base one summer as a clerical aide and was disenchanted with the lifestyle military personnel exhibited ... "Some love it, others hate it, but all felt restricted by the Army." Another had an opportunity to work in her mother's firm in the business and finance realm. Two of the women who wanted to pursue the medical career had worked in hospitals during the summer. The nature of this cause and effect relationship could not be determined but was a significant factor in shaping the career decisions of the women.

The following statements generally summarize the Black female students' attitudes and perceptions of careers and college:

- Careers

- Students were very career oriented.
- Their career choices focused on the professions.
- Highest ranked career attribute was challenge.
- High salaries were important but not crucial.

- Military Career

- Some expressed an interest in a military career.
- One expressed an interest in an Army career.
- Some perceived a ceiling on opportunities for Blacks.

- College Awareness

- Students were very college oriented.
- Attributes used in comparing colleges included academic reputation, location and social opportunities, Black and male representation.

- West Point Awareness

- Students' knowledge varied with respect to admission procedures, West Point programs and length of commitment.



## HIGH SCHOOL FOCUS GROUPS

I. Awareness of Careers

- A. Their career preferences or decision point
- B. Age when concept of career planning becomes important
- C. How is concept relayed?
- D. By whom or what?

II. Perceptions of Alternatives

- A. Careers considered
- B. Attributes of career options
  - Financial stability
  - Security
  - Challenge
  - Status
  - Expanding opportunities
  - Flexibility
  - Creativity
  - Academic preparation
  - Personal life
- C. Importance of attributes
- D. Comparison of attributes
- E. Basis for perceptions (literature, media, personal experience)

III. Sources of Influence

- A. Who? Their roles
- B. What? (market conditions, labor statistics, etc.)
- C. Relative importance of each

IV. Military Career

- A. Perceptions of career
- B. Opportunities for women/men
- C. Opportunities for Blacks
- D. Perceptions of branches

V. Perceptions of College Alternatives

- A. Number and names of institutions considered
- B. Attributes of institutions considered/likes and dislikes
- C. Relative importance of each
- D. Comparison of institutions
- E. Service academies
- F. Basis for these perceptions (direct experience, word-of-mouth, literature, etc.)

VI. Sources of Influence

- A. Who? Their roles
- B. What?
- C. Relative importance

VII. United States Military Academy

- A. What is it?
- B. Image
- C. How do you apply?
- D. How do you perceive program?
  - Academics
  - Athletics
  - Leadership
  - Regimentation
  - Social
  - Military
  - Black issues
  - Female issues
  - Physical stress
  - Time demand
- E. Basis for these feelings
- F. What types of people apply?
- G. Would you apply to West Point? Why? Why not?

SECTION III

INTERVIEWS WITH GRADUATES

## BLACK WEST POINT GRADUATES

A. Purpose of Interviews

To identify the key issues in the recruitment and retention of Black Americans and women, Market Facts conducted qualitative research in the form of focus groups and in-depth interviews. Such research was conducted with many types of respondents, including the Black West Point graduates discussed in this summary report.

Such qualitative research is designed to identify the range of attitudes, opinions and ideas held by a particular type of respondent. The research is not intended to be a quantitative measure of the extent to which such attitudes may exist. Thus, the research should not be considered generalizable.

B. Description of Respondents

In-depth telephone interviews were conducted with three Black male graduates of West Point. They represented the Classes of 1958, 1965 and 1968. All are presently employed in the civilian sector. Their occupations include manufacturing manager for General Motors and manager for Continental Illinois Bank. The other graduate is presently attending dental school.

At the time of their separation from the Army they had achieved the ranks of captain, major (to be promoted to lt. colonel at time of separation) and colonel. All went into the infantry and served terms from 8 to 13 years. One graduate currently served as a reserve admissions officer for West Point.

### C. Awareness of West Point

\*Initial awareness of educational opportunities at West Point was derived from a variety of sources. One man had an uncle who had spent 20 years in the Army and had encouraged him to apply. In addition, both his principal and a teacher in high school served as Army reserve officers. Another graduate discovered West Point through attending a Boys State conference where cadets discussed educational opportunities. All graduates had viewed the television series of cadets at West Point and Annapolis aired at that time. All were attracted to West Point because of the educational opportunities, lack of tuition, and prestige.

Alternative institutions considered by the graduates included:

- Harvard University
- University of California at Los Angeles
- University of Chicago
- University of Illinois
- University of Kansas
- U.S. Air Force Academy
- U.S. Naval Academy
- Washburn University
- Whittier College

The University of Kansas and Washburn University were selected because of their athletic scholarship programs and because they were in-state schools for the applicants. Harvard, Yale and the University of Illinois were selected because they were

\*Note: All comments regarding perceptions, levels of awareness and experiences at West Point should be qualified in that these graduates attended during the 1960s.

prestigious schools with a history of success for graduates. Only one applied to all three service academies; he actually preferred Air Force because of the opportunity to learn to fly. The Naval Academy was viewed as being less regimented than either Air Force or Army and offering a variety of disciplines or majors.

Parents tended to influence the respondents positively toward a West Point education. Parents realized the value of the quality education at minimal cost. In addition, the prestige associated with a West Point education served as a positive factor influencing their parents. One graduate commented, "My parents were high on West Point because it graduated 'Generals'". Guidance counselors played a minimal role as influencing agents.

#### D. Life at West Point

Academic experiences at West Point were described as tough but no more than the graduates anticipated. Some indicated that they were self-taught, because "they give you a book and test you everyday...but it wasn't so bad. Classmates were available to help you out, and faculty members also offered assistance."

The graduates felt that the military training they received was adequate preparation for their military careers. The regimentation was considered an essential part of that training. One graduate said, "There's no time to argue and discuss... you need to have the option of planning and implementing your plan as opposed to trying to run a democratic Army."

Attitudes toward the program for fourth class cadets varied. While all felt that coping with stressful situations enabled the cadet to develop strong leadership capabilities, some respondents were concerned that plebe's self-confidence was undermined. One graduate said, "It's good to be humbled a little but

not too much." However, all felt that the stress created in the plebe year developed fraternal relationships between the cadets. "Mutual hardships develop bonds," one said. However, the strength of this bond was seen to be restricted among the cadets during their stay at West Point. They questioned the existence of this bond among West Point officers in the Army. Some felt the program created a spirit of intense competition that overrode the spirit of cooperation.

E. Racial and Sexist Issues

Overall, the graduates felt the comraderie was basically good. However, off-post white cadets tended to socialize with other white cadets, and the same was true for Black cadets. The comraderie among Black cadets was very high and provided an extremely strong informal support system. This relationship broke through the traditional lines of class systems and officer relationships.

Opinions varied on the question of West Point's genuine commitment to recruiting and retaining Blacks and women. One graduate declared, "There is no real commitment to meet the goals. West Point has an elitist attitude -- "If you want us, we want you; if you don't want us, we don't want you.....They're going to have to change those attitudes." Another felt that West Point did indeed have a commitment to recruiting Blacks, but needed to re-evaluate admission requirements, especially the emphasis on testing as a significant indicator. He felt that testing as a measure of potential should be measured in other ways. For those Black students who score marginally on the aptitude exams, non-cognitive measures should be highlighted. He said, "They need to find more individuals who are extremely bright and competitive in their own environment."

Comments about retention covered a variety of subjects. One graduate said that if retention rates for Blacks were approximately the same as for the majority group, the institution should merely treat everyone equally. "Why expect more of Blacks... they shouldn't do any better or worse than anyone else," he added. Another graduate spoke of retention in terms of the attitudes Blacks must have to persist in the environment. He commented, "Blacks who make it through...understand racism. They are able to maintain their racial identity through it all." Another spoke of retention for Blacks in terms of providing more role models (there were no Black officers at West Point during his term).

Little in the way of social outlets were provided for Black men. The social programs did not fulfill the needs of Black cadets. All graduates commented on the low number of Black cadets present at the Academy while they were there.

While women had not been integrated into the Academy at that time, the graduates felt women were disadvantaged because the orientation at the Academy was directed toward training for a general or chief commander. Women could not realistically achieve this level of leadership without being in the combat arms. However, they felt that the West Point preparation for professional civilian life was excellent.

Generally, the most rewarding experiences of the graduates while at West Point included:

- Participating in Glee Club
- Traveling internationally (Germany, Africa)
- Competing in Karate Club
- Participating in graduation ceremony

Least rewarding experiences generally related to plebe year experiences.



#### F. Recommendations

Their commendations for recruiting and retention included the following:

- Qualify the motivating factor for wanting to attend West Point. Is he/she self-motivated or parent motivated?
- Use more Black cadets, faculty and officers in recruiting efforts.
- Change the public image that West Point is impossible to reach. This image is held by students, counselor and high school administrators.
- Establish some type of mentor program for Black plebes by assigning them to an officer or faculty member through the four years.
- Evaluate all programs (social, academic, athletic) to ensure ethnic representation.

#### G. Summary

The following items summarize the attitudes and experiences of Black male West Point graduates:

- Awareness of West Point
  - Graduates became aware of West Point through family members, teachers, and at a Boys State Conference.
  - Parents served as primary sources of influence and positively influenced graduates towards attending West Point.
- Life at West Point
  - Graduates felt the academic curriculum to be tough but not unduly strenuous.
  - Military training and the regimental aspects of cadet life were felt to be essential components of the program and graduates felt it adequately prepared them for their military careers.

- The Fourth Class System was felt to be a positive factor in developing comraderie among the cadets but needed to be re-evaluated in terms of its relevancy toward developing effective leaders and officers.
  - A strong support system existed among Black cadets that transcended the traditional lines of class and officer relationships. This system was felt to provide the major impetus for retention among Black cadets.
  - Social opportunities for Blacks within the environment were limited. Social functions failed to address Black needs and concerns and inadequately represented the Black presence on campus.
- Recommendations
    - Use more Black representatives of West Point in recruiting efforts.
    - Establish mentor program for Black cadets.
    - Change public image of West Point as being unattainable.
    - Evaluate all programs to ensure minority representation.

## WHITE WOMEN GRADUATES OF WEST POINT

A. Purpose of Interviews

To identify the key issues in the recruitment and retention of Black Americans and women, Market Facts conducted qualitative research in the form of focus groups and in-depth interviews. Such research was conducted with many types of respondents, including the white women graduates of West Point discussed in this summary report.

Such qualitative research is designed to identify the range of attitudes, opinions and ideas held by a particular type of respondent. The research is not intended to be a quantitative measure of the extent to which such attitudes may exist. Thus, the research should not be considered generalizable.

B. Description of Respondents

In-depth interviews were conducted with three white women graduates of West Point's Class of 1980. Two of the women were married. Their spouses were in the same branch (Signal Corps) of the Army; both women anticipated being able to be transferred with their spouses for their next assignment.

C. Career Intentions

All of the women planned to resign after their five-year obligation primarily because of their desires to raise a family or to get married and have a family. One woman had originally anticipated staying in for 20 years and hoped to go to West Point and teach in the Physical Education program. Her plans had changed because she saw the inflexibility of Army life in terms of having a career and family. One woman remarked, "My husband said that he would get out if I wanted to stay in and make it a career, but I guess I feel that

wouldn't really work either. There's no system to provide for day care for women officers...My husband would have to quit his job everytime I got transferred, or we wouldn't be together...It's just not the kind of life I want to live." Another woman said, "At one time I thought I'd never get married until I was 30 or 35...I might even be Vice President of the United States but now I'll stay home if my husband says so, and be content to raise a family."

D. Awareness of Academy

All of the women had family or friends that had attended one of the service academies. One had an uncle who graduated from West Point in 1958; another had a male friend attending the Academy who encouraged her to apply. One woman had a brother who at that time attended the U.S. Naval Academy. "He knew about the whole thing earlier (integration of women into the academies) and so I applied before they really made it all official...in early September." Two of the three visited West Point for the three-day period and resided at the Thayer Hotel. "It was great... since we couldn't reside in the barracks we stayed at the Thayer Hotel...of course we ordered the most expensive things on the menu because they paid for it all...but since we were located there, we really didn't get any real insight as to Academy life."

E. Academy Information

All of the women felt that the Academy literature was good, but questioned the validity of other sources of information. They faulted the Academy in some respects for not adequately preparing them for their experience at West Point. They also contended that there was little they could do in terms of addressing women's issues, since they were the first class of women. In addition, they felt no amount of written communications

could prepare them for the mental pressure they would experience. However, they felt more could be communicated with respect to making physical preparation for activities at West Point. They were extremely bitter that no one told them that they couldn't participate in the artillery arms until their senior year.

F. Other Institutions

Other institutions to which the women had applied included:

- Florida State University
- University of Florida
- University of Iowa
- University of Illinois
- U.S. Air Force Academy
- U.S. Naval Academy

One woman applied only to the three service academies and stated, "I really didn't have a preference...I just wanted to make the military a part of my life." Another woman said, "I never really compared West Point to the other institutions (civilian)...I just thought I'd try it for a summer and see if I liked it...I had the opportunity to try so why not?...it had a lot to do with the appeal of being 'one of the first women' there." The civilian schools were selected because of their reputations in certain disciplines, journalism in one case. The others were not committed to any specific major.

G. West Point Decision

All graduates indicated that their parents were non-committal in influencing them for or against West Point. However, one woman indicated that the widespread publicity and celebrity

status she received from the local newspapers and magazines influenced her decision to attend. One woman said, "I guess I got caught up in the idea of joining." Another woman said, "There were times when I thought I had made a serious mistake (by attending West Point)...but I had to stay there just to spite those who were trying to dump me." Two of the women stated that had they the opportunity to do it all over again, they would definitely not attend West Point.

#### H. West Point Experience

The academic curriculum did not pose a serious threat to any of the women. They felt they were able to handle that aspect of cadet life perhaps better than any other. One woman said, "I made all A's and B's in high school and at West Point B's and C's ...it really wasn't that hard, but I just didn't want to study. They regulate so much of your life...sometimes I was really tired, other times I would say to myself, 'No, I'm not going to study.'" Another mentioned that while all the literature says that the academic grading system is not competitive, she was always rated on the Bell curve relative to others. One graduate stated, "There are so many opportunities for help, there's no way to flunk."

The athletic curriculum presented major problems. All of these respondents indicated that the athletic curriculum was worse than they had anticipated. They specified the running as "horrible". They felt inadequately prepared physically to cope with the demands and faulted the institution for not telling them enough about the strenuous program, and how better to prepare.

While they mentioned wanting to quit at times, they refused to give in. They felt it to be a no win situation; it was easier to stay than to resign. One woman indicated that the

regimentation was not unduly restrictive, but attributed that to her company commander.

The relationship of the women with their peers varied. One indicated that her company was good regarding its attitudes toward women. She said she developed and sustained solid friendships with male cadets. The others indicated substantial disappointment that male cadets neither appreciated the existence of women there or acknowledged their existence. However, as one woman put it, "The guys (male plebes) were merely following the lead of the older ones...They really didn't have a choice, unless they wanted to be subjected to humiliation." One woman said that she had served as a cheerleader. She thought that this decision would be a good one. Instead, the male cadets resented her being in the limelight so much.

The graduates perceived that counseling and guidance opportunities were almost nil for the first class of women. "Supposedly the TAC was to provide guidance, but if you got a bad one like I did, then that was definitely not an alternative." "Going to the Counseling Center had a stigma attached to it because of the "macho image" that pervaded the atmosphere, so that was out", commented one graduate. Another felt that the OB-GYN clinic had provided extensive support, especially during her first months there when her menstrual cycle became irregular. "Intellectually I knew what was going on, but it was reassuring for them to tell me everyone else had the same problem, too."

All women graduates were completely disenchanted with the portrayal of women role models at the Academy. They never relied on them for any kind of support or assistance. "Mostly, we just turned to each other for support," said one graduate. All women indicated the special programs for "women" were extremely dangerous because, again, it gave them more visibility. "When you get a group of women together alone, it's bad for the class morale." While they felt obvious changes were needed in the system they generally contended that one should not "push" the issue.

"Everytime we looked up, someone was ramming another survey questionnaire down our throats," declared one graduate.

The lack of privacy was the main problem in the women's personal and social lives. "There is no private life... everyone knows everyone else's business." Another commented, "I know lots of girls had problems in dating other cadets, but my fiance was in the Corps and nobody really bothered us." Some indicated that a fun night meant going to Grant Hall for ice-cream. They considered this to be a luxury. "Our priorities were so different," said one woman, "I'd go home and all my friends would be talking about hitting all the bars... I guess I really didn't even have the desire to indulge myself in that kind of behavior."

All of the women felt that West Point had adequately prepared them for life in the Army. They compared themselves to ROTC and OCS graduates. They believed that West Point graduates were better informed, more disciplined and more knowledgeable, especially regarding Army customs, courtesies, and the nature of the different branches of the Army. However, they felt inadequately prepared to deal with life as a woman officer. They were confused about "when do I play lieutenant, and when do I play woman?". Furthermore, they sensed insolent behavior on the part of Army officers who considered them to be "playing Army." In addition, they were subject to sexual harassment from soldiers who winked or flirted, and often placed them in precarious situations. The biggest concerns about their military careers revolved around being transferred away from their husbands.



The following were considered to be the most satisfying experiences of the women:

- Trips abroad (Italy)
- "Learning I could run"
- "Learning I could do things I'd never even thought about"

Least satisfying experiences included:

- "Learning that guys can be such jerks."
- "Losing all my self-confidence, getting a warped picture of myself...Now that I'm at Ft. Gordon, I'm finding out I'm not as bad as they said I was."
- "Learning that cadets are not the outstanding, upstanding Americans I once thought them to be."

#### I. Recommendations

Recommendations for recruiting women include the following:

- Use more women cadets
  - Through Cadet Public Relations Council
  - Let prospects stay with women plebes who aren't afraid to tell them what's going on
- Use personal approach

Recommendations for retention include:

- "Don't emphasize women only, emphasize all cadets."
- "Select better role models."
- "Cadre instructing new cadets should have attitudes of training leaders, not joking around."
- Allow time to change attitudes.

F. Summary

The following items summarize the attitudes and experiences of white female West Point graduates.

- Awareness of West Point
  - All graduates had family members who had either attended the academies or were presently attending who encouraged them to apply.
  - They felt written communication was inadequate in terms of preparing them for life at West Point.
  - Some approached the idea of attending West Point as an experimental experience.
  - Parents had little influence on their decision to attend.
- West Point Experience
  - As the first class of women at West Point the graduates felt like experimental guinea pigs.
  - The athletic curriculum presented the major problem for the women, especially with respect to running requirements.
  - They assessed the academic curriculum as not unduly strenuous.
  - Male attitudes towards the women's presence were generally negative.
  - The primary support system existed among the women themselves.
  - Role models are inadequate in terms of providing support or guidance.
- Military career
  - All women planned to terminate their military career after their five-year obligation because they wanted to pursue a desire to have a family life.

- West Point prepared them adequately for their military career in terms of knowledge and skills needed to perform.
- West Point inadequately prepared them for surviving in the military as a woman officer.
- Recommendations
  - Use more women representatives from West Point in recruiting efforts.
  - Select better role models.
  - Ensure that all training is relevant to developing leaders.
  - Use caution in selecting programs for "women only."

## Graduate Interview Guide

### I. Background Information

- A. Name/Sex/Race/Marital Status
- B. Graduating Class

### II. Present Status

#### A. Employment

- 1. Military
  - Branch/title/responsibilities
  - Career path
  - Career goals
  - How long remain in service
  - Personal goals
  - Satisfaction
- 2. Civilian
  - Job
  - Firm
  - Length of employment
  - Career path
  - Career goals
  - Personal goals
  - Satisfaction

### III. Awareness of West Point

- A. When heard about
- B. Information sources (peers, family, counselors, West Point contacts, media, literature)
- C. Information sought
- D. Information received (accuracy, helpfulness)
- E. West Point programs
- F. Nomination process

### IV. Perceptions of Alternatives

- A. Number and names of institutions considered
- B. Attributes of institutions considered/likes and dislikes
- C. Relative importance of each

- D. Comparison of institutions
  - E. Other service academies
  - F. Basis for these perceptions (direct experience, word-of-mouth, literature, etc.)
- V. Sources of Influence
- A. Who? Their roles (especially West Point contacts)
  - B. What?
  - C. Relative importance
- VI. Decision
- A. Schools applied to/accepted at (especially other academies)
  - B. First choice, second choice/Why?
  - C. West Point ranking/Why?
  - D. When made decision
  - E. Factors influencing decision (list and priority)
    - Parents' desire
    - Career choice
    - Honor, prestige/social prestige
    - "Free" education
    - Academic reputation
    - Serve country
    - Patriotism
    - Leadership training
    - Physical development
    - Travel/adventure opportunities
    - Assured career
    - Financial security
    - Advancement in service
    - Athletics
    - Challenge
    - New opportunities for women
    - Other
  - F. Reactions to decision
    - Peers
    - Counselors
    - Family
    - Others

## G. Post decision

- Any doubts
- Anything to reaffirm?
- Would do again? Why/why not?

## VII. General Experiences at West Point

## A. Anticipations

## 1. Confidence in meeting standards

- Academic
- Athletic
- Regimentation
- Social
- Military
- Black issues
- Female issues
- Physical stress
- Time demands

## 2. Basis for these feelings

## B. Actual Experience

## 1. Was it what you expected?

- Better (specifics)
- Worse (specifics)
- Most stressful events/times/aspects

## 2. Have feelings changed over time and in what ways?

## 3. Most satisfying experience

## 4. Least satisfying experience

## 5. Other disappointments

## C. Peers

## 1. Feelings about classmates, plebes, upperclass cadets in general

## 2. Opportunities to meet all kinds of people

## 3. Level of comraderie

## 4. Reactions to women, minorities

## VIII. Reactions to Specific Aspects of West Point

## A. Counseling/Guidance

1. To whom do you go and for what reason?
2. Type and adequacy of help given--cadets in general; special groups (e.g., women and Blacks)
3. Perceived concern shown by staff toward individual cadets
4. Perceptions of cadets about cadets who seek services
5. Desired changes
6. Satisfaction/dissatisfaction

## B. Academic Programs

1. General satisfaction
2. Comparison with civilian colleges/academies
3. Likes and dislikes with respect to:
  - Variety of courses
  - Quality of instruction
  - Individual instruction
  - Study time
  - Homework
  - Grading
  - Facilities
  - Other
4. Desired changes

## C. Personal/Social Life

1. General satisfaction
2. Facilities/opportunities
3. Comparison with civilian colleges/academies
4. Likes and dislikes
5. Desired changes

6. Adequacy of West Point preparation
  - Academic
  - Leadership
  - Regimentation
  - Relating to enlisted personnel

B. Experience

1. Was it better or worse than expectations?
2. Most satisfying experience
3. Least satisfying experience
4. Attitudes toward Blacks
  - Officer
  - Enlisted
5. Attitudes toward women
  - Officer
  - Enlisted
6. Personal/ social
7. Financial
8. Further education
9. Satisfaction

X. Recommendations

A. Recruiting

1. Most effective recruiting
2. Least effective recruiting

B. Retention

1. What contributes most to attrition at West Point/  
Army?
2. What would reduce attrition at West Point/Army?



#### D. Military Training

1. General satisfaction
2. Likes and dislikes with respect to:
  - First summer
  - Fourth class system
  - Honor system
  - Barracks life and indoctrination
  - Military science course exercises
  - Aptitude for service or leadership education system
3. Does system accomplish its purpose?
4. Strengths and weaknesses of system
5. Desired changes

#### E. Athletics

1. General satisfaction
2. Facilities/opportunities
3. Comparison with civilian colleges/academies
4. Likes and dislikes with respect to:
  - Facilities
  - Variety of intramural sports
  - Varsity athletics
5. Desired changes
  - Cadets as a whole
  - Special groups (e.g., women)

#### IX. Army Experience

##### A. Expectations

1. Job responsibilities
2. Career path
3. Five year commitment
4. Opportunities for Blacks
5. Opportunities for women

SECTION IV

CADET FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS

## WHITE MALE (PLEBES) CADETS

A. Purpose of Interviews

To identify the key issues in the recruitment and retention of Black Americans and women, Market Facts conducted qualitative research in the form of focus groups and in-depth interviews. Such research was conducted with many types of respondents, including the white male plebes discussed in this summary report.

Such qualitative research is designed to identify the range of attitudes, opinions and ideas held by a particular type of respondent. The research is not intended to be a quantitative measure of the extent to which such attitudes may exist. Thus, the research should not be considered generalizable.

B. Description of Respondents

Eight white male plebes participated in the focus group discussion. The discussion guide is included at the end of the section. Like the other cadets interviewed, the comments of these young men were generally positive and candid.

C. West Point Decision

All but one young man first became aware of West Point during their junior and senior years in high school. This one cadet spent part of his childhood at West Point. For most, their awareness of the Academy was provided by a West Point representative who was visiting their schools. These initial contacts fostered very positive impressions of the academy.

At the time they were first exposed to West Point, several of the cadets had been considering the military. At least one young man was intending to apply to the Air Force Academy because of an interest in flying. In his case, a West Point Admissions Officer visited him and made such an impression on him that he never applied to the Air Force Academy. Another cadet had enlisted in the Army and was told by his sergeant that he should apply to the Academy's prep school, based on his performance on a series of aptitude tests.

Cadets reported that parents, friends, and West Point personnel all affected their decision to come to the Academy. There was no indication from their comments, however, that any one of these sources was more important than any other.

Cadets were typically told that the Academy would be tough, would place great demands on their time, would require them to be in top physical condition, and would be a good stepping-stone to important positions in civilian life. Moreover, all said that they were told to go to West Point only if they want to. All in all, the cadets' comments suggest that they had no false expectations about West Point at the time they made the decision to accept an appointment.

Other colleges and universities considered included most of the nation's leading engineering schools as well as the other service academies. The major reasons for selecting West Point over these other schools were its academic reputation, the free education, and the challenge and leadership opportunities offered by the school. On the other hand, parental influence, varsity athletics, and opportunities for travel were the least important reasons for coming to West Point. Still another positive attraction of the Academy was its "whole man" concept which several cadets stated weighed heavily in their decision to come to West Point.

In comparing West Point to civilian schools, many of the cadets had focused on the issue of free time. While civilian schools were perceived as affording an individual ample free time, most considered the lack of free time at West Point a fair price for what they were getting in return--a high quality, free education. More than one cadet said that had he gone to a civilian school he would have had to work. Hence, his free time would have been limited.

Having made the decision to come to West Point, no one indicated that they found the admission process onerous. Moreover, no one reported having experienced any difficulties with the procedure.

D. Life at West Point

At the time of the focus groups, these cadets had been at West Point less than six months. Their initial reactions to the Academy were quite positive. With respect to almost every aspect of West Point, these cadets had nothing but praise. The academic program was considered to be excellent. Cadets were pleased by the amount of help the faculty provided individual students. Moreover, the cadets' comments suggested that they felt close to their peers as well as to many upperclassmen. Classmates were viewed as quite willing to pull for one another, while many upperclassmen were perceived as receptive to listening to the problems of plebes. Even the 4th Class System was praised. In general, they felt it was necessary. That is, it gave cadets a first-hand experience in leadership-subordination interaction. As such, it was perceived as serving as a vehicle for weeding-out those who would not become good officers.

On the negative side, these cadets voiced typical complaints: lack of sleep, lack of free time, the restricted social life of plebes, some of the "rituals" of the 4th Class System. Surprisingly, several cadets complained that Beast Barracks was a disappointment.

They had been led to believe that the experience would be far worse than it had been. However, all agreed that Reorganization Week had been the most traumatic experience to date. In this regard, several cadets criticized the Academy literature they had seen prior to coming to West Point, for playing down the realities of a plebe's life at West Point.

Finally, the female cadets were singled out for the greatest criticism. The young men in the group perceived that female cadets lowered the performance of squads. The consensus was that the standards had been lowered for women. Such a double standard was resulted. Why, they asked, were women at West Point if they can't serve in combat?

## BLACK FEMALE CADETS

A. Purpose of Interviews

To identify the key issues in the recruitment and retention of Black Americans and women, Market Facts conducted qualitative research in the form of focus groups and in-depth interviews. Such research was conducted with many types of respondents, including the Black female cadets discussed in this summary report.

Such qualitative research is designed to identify the range of attitudes, opinions and ideas held by a particular type of respondent. The research is not intended to be a quantitative measure of the extent to which such attitudes may exist. Thus, the research should not be considered generalizable.

B. Description of Respondents

Eleven Black women cadets participated in the focus group discussion. The women represented all classes (plebe through first class). The discussion guide is included after this report. Generally, the women's attitudes were very positive and they discussed their experiences at West Point freely and openly.

C. West Point Decision

Most of the cadets first became aware of West Point as students in high school; two through high school junior ROTC programs and seven as seniors in high school (through the ACT search program). Several of the cadets had relatives who served in the Army which had some bearing on their decision to attend West Point.

Positive influences on the decision to attend West Point were rated for a variety of sources. Parental influence appeared to be the strongest agent and resulted from their being financially unable to provide assistance for the students at other institutions. In some such cases, West Point was the only realistic option. Two of the women had parents presently serving in the military (Army and Air Force), and their parents encouraged them to apply. Several women commented that "Captain Maldan's crew" was extremely influential in both encouraging them to persist in the application process and providing assistance. One woman mentioned specifically that a "cute Black cadet" recruited her. Four cadets mentioned liaison officers as having a strong impact on their decision to attend.

Negative influences included some counselors and teachers. Several women mentioned that their counselors had attempted unsuccessfully to talk them out of pursuing an education at West Point. Others added that teachers felt that their filling out forms was a waste of time.

The application process did not present any major problems. The only item that caused some concern was the nomination requirement. Residents from the District of Columbia area believed that obtaining nominations was difficult. Representative Fontroy was mentioned specifically as not helpful, because he turned in the forms late and was perceived to be uninterested in the whole matter.

Most cadets felt that the communications (pamphlets, brochures, catalogs, etc.) were adequate and accurate, but did not present a true picture of the regimentation in the environment. Most cadets indicated that the literature accurately portrayed the tough and competitive atmosphere but the message did not hit home as to the extent of that challenge. Others mentioned that they had no idea that they would have to get dirty (i.e., Beast) and it came as a total shock to them. Some



thought it would be a "normal" college.

Other colleges and universities to which the students applied included:

- Boston University
- Georgia Institute of Technology
- Georgetown University
- Harvard University
- Massachusetts Institute of Technology
- Naval Preparatory Academy
- Pennsylvania State University
- Tennessee State University
- University of California at Los Angeles
- U.S. Air Force Academy
- Virginia State University

These institutions were selected on the basis of their academic programs (engineering) or because of their location (closer to home). The major factor for choosing West Point over the competition was basically financial in nature.

D. Life at West Point

With respect to the availability and adequacy of support organizations, the Gospel Choir was felt to provide the most supportive structure for the women cadets. Most cadets indicated that they "lived for Tuesday nights when they could meet together, talk, and sing." In addition, the Contemporary Affairs Society (CAS) provided for a time when Blacks could get together and plan social and cultural events. The Counseling Center was felt to be good. However, few cadets had used the center because of the stigma attached for those who seek assistance there.

Some mentioned that Chaplains provided some help and support. The chaplain was perceived to be the closest thing to non-officer/non-military counseling.

When questioned about the role of women officers as a support system, the women indicated very negative attitudes. Some said, "How can we talk to them...they're worse off than we...they're trying to make it, too." Others felt the women officers had either homosexual tendencies or served as poor role models (i.e., too flirtatious, out to prove their toughness, etc). Some were aware of a Black woman officer in the Admissions Office but had established no contact with her.

Peer support also suffered among Blacks. "The Fourth Class system restricts support among Blacks," one woman said. She continued, "For example, a white girl can go next door to talk with a friend (woman), but we may have to go to a different company just to talk with another Black...(In this case) you have to get permission, tell why you're going, be restricted to a certain time frame, etc...then when you do get it all straight, you start out and some jerk (officer) stops you and wants to talk or hassle you. By the time you get there, you really don't have enough time to do anything."

Black male cadets were cited as a source of fluctuation because of their attitudes toward having Black women at West Point and serving as a support system. For example, some indicated that most Black male cadets "turned down" sexist complaints from the women. "They'll be buddy-buddy on the one hand, but the minute you want their support about some sexist issue, they want no part of it," said one woman. In addition, the women resented the Black male cadets' behavior at social functions. "They act like we're not there, or they're doing us a favor by dancing with us," said one woman. Another said, "When they bus in civilian women, we're totally non-existent."

They don't even know us. It's perfectly acceptable for them to have civilian girl friends, but the minute we bring up some guy from back home, they have something to say." The only opportunity for Black cadets to interact on a personal basis was at Gospel Choir or CAS. Yet many of the women in the focus group stated that the discussion was the first opportunity they had experienced during their stay at West Point to talk with other members within the group.

The women could not determine whether they experienced more difficulties as a female or a Black. Sexist comments made by officers were normal interchanges to which they had become accustomed. The biggest problem here was their inability to express their problems through any formal process. Plebes are quite naturally limited in voicing their objections or complaints which presents a major problem for them. For example, one woman stated, "This officer called the woman a 'bitch' ...I knew it was illegal but didn't know exactly what I could do about it." Another added, "You can't go through the traditional chain of command because it will get you nowhere, but if you buck the system, then you're labeled a 'hysterical female'".

Racist remarks and attitudes were less direct but nonetheless visible. Most racial slurs occurred at the mess hall when officers would indicate (to a Black cadet), "Hey, how about some more (cornbread, ribs, collard greens)...don't you all like this stuff...etc."

E. Racial and Sexual Issues Associated with Hair Care

Cultural differences presented problems in communication. For example, one woman indicated that she had just spent ten minutes trying to get her "Afro" in place when an officer came into the room and demanded that she comb her hair. When she stated she did not understand, he became annoyed and angry, thinking she was just being impudent.

The whole issue of hair raised a considerable amount of controversy and subsequent discussion. First of all, the women said there was not a Black beautician to whom they could go for assistance. White barbers did not know how to cut or style Black hair. The women were extremely bitter that they were left to fend for themselves, with the result being a poor appearance or masculine appearance. For example, one woman pointed at a cadet in the group and said, "Look at \_\_\_\_\_, she doesn't have to look like that...if she could fix her hair she'd be beautiful, but right now she looks like a guy...you can't feel very good about yourself like that." "Chemically straightened hair cut to the required length requires nightly rolling and who wants to be the subject of ridicule...walking around in rollers." Naturals require constant attention and when you take off your hat (in formation) you've got an imprint of the hat in your hair...you can't take care of it then...it's hopeless. Some have tried the Geri-curl but that requires your re-doing it every couple of weeks because it grows so fast." In addition, the women were upset by the lack of cultural understanding with respect to hair from officers. For example, one woman stated, "You can't comb your hair in front of an officer, but white girls are always combing their hair at the dinner table, which really turns my stomach (taboo in Black society). In addition, they give you their tiny combs with teeth so tight you can't even see through it...now you tell me how I supposed to comb this (Afro) with that!"

F. Issues Surrounding Femininity

While the issue of hair raised a great deal of discussion, the underlying issue was the low self-image manifested. As one woman concluded, "They've got us here doing all this (masculine)

stuff, wearing masculine clothes, etc.,...the least I can do is look like a woman."

The subject of clothing also represented an area of concern. The women felt that the clothes were not becoming to their femininity. "The pants are so loose you get lost in them," commented one cadet. Another said, "You get two skirts for every one pair of pants, but you can't wear them because they'll think you're trying to flirt...anyway they're not realistic...I mean who wants to wear these shoes with a skirt?"

Social outlets and opportunities were viewed as inadequate for Blacks. CAS attempts to sponsor as many social functions as possible. "There are no mixers with male colleges, only female colleges" was the perception of the women. "If you go to one of 'their parties' no one is going to ask you to dance anyway so why bother?" Because of the lack of interaction with males outside of West Point, women are forced to date cadets. One woman stated emphatically, "I know its illegal to date a cadet, but the Army controls every other aspect of my life. They simply cannot tell me who and who not to love."

When asked why they continued to persist, despite the difficulties they incurred, the women indicated that staying was easier than resigning. In addition, parental pressure was exerted in many cases for the student to persist. However, most indicated that should the time arise when they would be requested to resign (mainly for academic reasons), they would rather quit than be put out.

G. Summary

The following items summarize Black female cadet attitudes and experiences relating to West Point:

- West Point Decision
  - Most cadets became aware of West Point as students in high school, many as seniors.
  - Parents served as the strongest influencing agents to attend West Point.
  - Liaison officers interfaced frequently with the cadets and impacted them favorably.
  - Negative influences on the decision to attend West Point included teachers and counselors.
  - The deciding factor to attend West Point revolved around financial considerations.
- West Point experiences
  - Black support organizations include the Gospel Choir and the Contemporary Affairs Society.
  - The Counseling Center is considered to be adequate but is seldom used.
  - Women officers provide poor role models.
  - The Fourth class system restricts peer support among Black cadets.
  - The lack of social life is defined as being the major adjustment difficulty at West Point. Social programs do not represent the Black presence.
  - There is evidence of sexual/racial harassment and a lack of formal channels to exchange concerns.
  - The lack of a beautician qualified to work with Black hair is a major concern.
  - There is evidence of women cadets sustaining sexual identity problems.
  - Concerns about women cadet's clothing are evident.

## Discussion Guide

### I. Introduction

#### Awareness of West Point

- A. When heard about
- B. Information sources (peers, family, counselors, West Point contacts, media, literature)
- C. Information sought
- D. Information received (accuracy, helpfulness)
- E. West Point programs
- F. Nominations process

### II. Perceptions of Alternatives

- A. Number and names of institutions considered
- B. Attributes of institutions considered/Likes and dislikes
- C. Relative importance of each
- D. Comparison of institutions
- E. Other service academies
- F. Basis for these perceptions (direct experience, word-of-mouth, literature, etc.)

### III. Sources of Influence

- A. Who? Their roles (especially West Point contacts)
- B. What?
- C. Relative importance

### IV. Decision

- A. Schools applied to/accepted at (especially other academies)
- B. First choice, second choice Why?
- C. West Point ranking Why?
- D. When made decision
- E. Factors influencing decision (list and priority)

- Parents' desire
- Career choice
- Honor, prestige/social prestige
- "Free" education
- Academic reputation
- Serve country
- Patriotism
- Leadership training
- Physical development
- Travel/adventure opportunities
- Assured career
- Financial security
- Advancement in service
- Athletics
- Challenge
- New opportunities for women
- Other

F. Reactions to decision

- Peers
- Counselors
- Family
- Others

G. Post decision

- Any doubts
- Anything to reaffirm?
- Would do again? Why/why not?

VI. General Experiences at West Point

A. Anticipations

1. Confidence in meeting standards

- Academic
- Athletic
- Regimentation
- Social
- Military
- Black issues
- Female issues
- Physical stress
- Time demands

2. Basis for these feelings

B. Actual Experience

1. Was it what you expected?

- Better (specifics)
- Worse (specifics)
- Most stressful events/times/aspects



4. Desired changes

- C. Personal/Social Life

1. General satisfaction
2. Facilities/opportunities
3. Comparison with civilian colleges/academies
4. Likes and dislikes
5. Desired changes

- D. Military Training

1. General satisfaction
2. Likes and dislikes with respect to:
  - First summer
  - Fourth class system
  - Honor system
  - Barracks life and indoctrination
  - Military science course exercises
  - Aptitude for service or leadership education system
3. Does system accomplish its purpose?
4. Strengths and weaknesses of system
5. Desired changes

- E. Athletics

1. General satisfaction
2. Facilities/opportunities
3. Comparison with civilian colleges/academies
4. Likes and dislikes with respect to:
  - Facilities
  - Variety of intramural sports
  - Varsity athletics
5. Desired changes
  - Cadets as a whole
  - Special groups (e.g., women)

## V. Future Orientation

- A. Commitment to graduate (now versus when entered)
- B. Commitment to career (now versus when entered)
- C. Would you make same decision again? Why/why not?
- D. Would you recommend West Point to friends? Why/why not?

SECTION V

DROP-OUT INTERVIEWS

## DROP-OUT INTERVIEWS

A. Purpose of Interviews

To identify the key issues in the recruitment and retention of Black Americans and women, Market Facts conducted qualitative research in the form of focus group and in-depth interviews. Such research was conducted with many types of respondents, including the drop-outs discussed in this summary report.

Such qualitative research is designed to identify the range of attitudes, opinions and ideas held by a particular type of respondent. The research is not intended to be a quantitative measure of the extent to which such attitudes may exist. Thus, the research should not be considered generalizable.

B. Description of Respondents

Telephone interviews were conducted with six cadets who had resigned from West Point. They represented members of the Class of 1981, 1983 and 1984. Included in this group were five white females and one Black male. All respondents were single and attended school full-time at the time of the interview. All of the interviewees except one had relatives associated with the military (father, brothers and uncles), and one had enlisted in the Army prior to attending West Point.

The colleges presently attended by the respondents included Pennsylvania State University, University of Wyoming, Western Maryland College, University of Texas, University of Denver, and University of Arizona. The major fields of study covered mathematics, nursing, ceramic engineering and physics, biology, finance, and bioengineering. Three of the six planned to attend graduate school, two pursuing medical school and one for business. All respondents were basically satisfied with their present college status.

### C. Awareness of West Point

Initial contact with West Point and awareness of the institution by the respondents evolved from a variety of sources. These included talking with West Point recruiters at a local college night, viewing the movie "Women at West Point" and subsequently writing for information, and following through with the ACT search mailgram. In other cases, West Point was viewed as an alternative to the Air Force or Officer Candidate School. In most cases, no serious consideration was given to West Point prior to the respondent's junior or senior year in high school. However, a general level of awareness (i.e., knowledge of West Point existence, programs and features) was evident prior to the freshman year.

Respondants said that the application process was very thorough and necessary for identifying qualified candidates. They felt the procedure gave them a good idea of what to expect during the normal school term. All said the process was long-- in some cases, 8 to 10 months. While numerous forms were required to be completed, the sequence with which they were distributed (one at a time) simplified the process. Thus respondents did not feel the application process to be unnecessarily tedious.

The nominations process, however, did present problems for some of the respondents. There appeared to be a lack of communication regarding the time deadlines for obtaining nominations from members of Congress. In several cases, by the time the necessary forms were received, the deadline had already passed. However, in all cases West Point was able to secure a nomination from other sources.

The alternative institutions selected by the West Point applicants varied in size and scope. However, all selections were based on the reputation of departmental programs. Generally,

the respondents applied to and were accepted by 3 to 5 other institutions. Two of the respondents applied to other service academies. The list included:

- U.S. Air Force Academy
- U.S. Naval Academy
- University of California at Berkeley
- Catholic University
- Cornell University
- Drexel University
- Elkbroom University
- Johns Hopkins University
- Marquette University
- Officer Candidate School
- Northwestern University
- Syracuse University
- Tulane University
- University of Arizona
- University of Colorado
- University of Pennsylvania
- University of Washington
- University of Wisconsin
- University of Wyoming

In most cases, West Point was the first or second choice of the applicant. Generally, the West Point academic programs were considered to be on equal par with the top public and private institutions. The final determining factor was financial in nature (i.e., completely free education). The other factor frequently mentioned in regard to the choice between West Point and other institutions was the small class size and student-teacher ratio.

#### D. Decision Process

Sources of influence on the applicant varied widely in terms of sources and impacts. Generally, parents were supportive of the student's personal choice. Any pressure exerted was generally for West Point because of the financial assistance factor. Counselors and teachers had mixed perceptions of West Point and the student's assessed ability to succeed.

In one instance a West Point graduate, a neighbor of the respondent, exerted pressure to attend West Point. In this case, the respondent said she applied primarily to please the neighbor although she had some doubts. In another case the publicity received by the respondent exerted undue pressure on her decision to attend. She lived in a small town and received widespread recognition of her appointment in local newspapers, magazines, etc. She felt overwhelmed by all the publicity. Although she had doubts about attending West Point, she felt a responsibility to her community to fulfill this perceived obligation. In yet another case, the respondent -- an enlistee in the Army -- wanted to attend Officer Candidate School (OCS). She was advised by an officer to try West Point since the OCS waiting lists were so long. With the exception of these few cases, however, most respondents felt they made the decision to attend West Point on their own.

Most of the respondents had substantial contact with West Point representatives, including liaison officers, recruiters, cadets and faculty. Specific recruiting programs mentioned include the high school academic workshop, college night, the MITE program, and the on-campus tour. All appeared to have a favorable effect on the respondents.

### E. West Point Experience

The perceived expectations for cadets and their actual experiences at West Point also vary. Most communicated the feeling that "I knew it was going to be tough, but..." Others said the experience was not to be as physically demanding as they had anticipated. One woman, a prior Army enlistee, felt that cadets were generally treated better than enlisted personnel. She said Army Basic Training was much more rigid than Cadet Basic Training and stated, "In the Army they treat you as if you're going to be enlisted the rest of your life. Here (at USMA) they treat you like kings and queens....doing your laundry, cleaning your rooms, and generally waiting on you."

The general attitude about the regimental facets of the environment was one of tremendous pressure, insufficient privacy and unnecessary discipline. Most indicated they had no idea what they were doing and felt like they were running around like "chickens with our heads cut off." While they appreciated the necessity for ...stilling discipline, the actual regimentation was perceived as "dumb", "overbearing" and "useless." One respondent admitted, "I needed some consistency in my life so I was prepared to accept the discipline.... but when you have no more than 30 minutes a day to yourself, it's ridiculous." Another said, "They need to bring everybody together one week in advance to fill out all the forms and then they can stick the military stuff at us." Yet another mentioned, "I usually get up early and start my day - but how can you get up early when you haven't had any sleep.... and you can't get to sleep if you're worried about what you have neglected to do that day, can't do that night because you have to be in bed, and know you'll be yelled at the next day for not having completed?" Thus, the general contention of the respondents regarding the regimentation was that it went to the extreme and negated its intended purpose and that it needed to be re-evaluated in terms of its intended purpose and its actual effectiveness.



Feelings about the fourth class system were even stronger. Comment ranged from "If its purpose is to weed out... then, yes, it's useful, but they lose a lot of good people through hazing" to "There is so much tradition at West Point, the world is changing but West Point is changing at a much slower pace." Generally, the respondents felt themselves to be robots in that they lost all self identity and, in some cases, sexuality. "People who go to West Point are confident and have always done well. It's a hard concept to learn that you are nothing. Someone is always bursting your balloon." Another respondent stated, "You run around in confusion all day... you have to immediately let go of all the things you used to do... no TV, radio, maybe newspapers, no sitting on your own bed... you have to be in uniform all day long, then change into your p.j.'s... the thrill of the night is polishing your shoes... there's no time to even think about what you're doing." One woman mentioned that at the university she presently attends she is one of four ex-West Point cadets. They have all found adjusting to civilian life to be extremely difficult and in some cases have taken approximately one year to feel normal again. She felt she had been robbed of her personality. All respondents concurred with this attitude with the exception of the one woman who came to West Point directly from the Army.

While the regimentation and fourth class system were found to be the least satisfying experiences, other aspects of cadet life were very satisfying. These experiences included "doing things I never thought I could do," "The R-day parade and the inspirational speech given by the Commandant," "the opportunity to talk to the upper class when you had a chance to be a person," "interaction with the other cadets" and "valuing my time... I never really valued my time until going to West Point." Thus, the aspects of meeting challenges and interacting on a personal basis with others offered the most rewarding experiences for the respondents.

The level of comraderie between the cadets appeared to vary among the squads and companies. Some indicated a closeness among the cadets - "We used to help each other a lot and take cover for other people." Others indicated a lot of bickering and bad feelings among the plebes because of the great pressure. One woman cited a specific example, "My roommate would have killed for recognition at the dinner table... she went to Prep School and was absolutely no help... She became very impatient when I was slow to learn things... They should room all Preps together." Another respondent indicated, "I read about all the closeness... but I didn't feel it... there's no time to develop friendships and get to know each other." These remarks indicate that the level of comraderie among the plebes varies by person and by company.

The respondents were questioned about the availability and adequacy of counseling and guidance personnel. While they were aware of available sources, they preferred not to make use of them. One respondent mentioned, "There were people you could go to but they were still cadets." Another said, "There weren't any civilians you could talk to."

The officers were regarded as being very distant. For example, one respondent said, "You could talk to him when things were going right, but not when things were going wrong - then he would always scold."

One woman stated that when she needed advice from her tactical officer, he merely reprimanded her. Another woman (who became ill during Beast Barracks and was subsequently discharged) noted that her tactical officer insisted she was faking her illness in order to not do her work. However, respondents said that there were other officers who were "really helpful and close. One respondent said, "While they didn't necessarily like us (women) being there, they didn't take it personally and tried to provide needed assistance and support." The chaplains were

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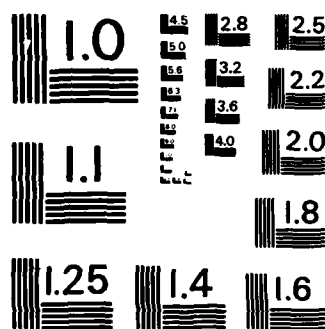
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regarded as being extremely helpful; so was a Christian cadet counselor. The majority of these respondents resigned from West Point during Beast Barracks and subsequently had little opportunity to interact with the Counseling Center, faculty and staff members. Since the majority of respondents resigned prior to the academic year, they were unable to relate experiences relative to that facet of the institution. The one woman who did stay for two years did comment that there was little time to study because of other activities, cadets were always tired and stood up in class to keep from falling asleep. Since they had to be in bed at a certain time, if they hadn't completed their studies they often used a flashlight under the blanket to continue their studies. She did, however, enjoy her relationship with her teachers.

All respondents agreed that there was little or no personal or social life at West Point. However, this attitude is based again on the limited exposure of the students to West Point during Beast Barracks. They were aware that upperclass cadets had social lives because they overheard them talking about dating plans but such activities held no meaning for them. Cadets had to make time to write letters home. One respondent stated that her first letter home contained fragments of four days, because she never had enough time to write. Other felt there was no time to be themselves; on weekends they still had to be in uniform to go off campus for a hamburger. There simply was no time to talk with and meet other people (during Beast ). "In a crowd, I still felt alone" was one comment. Another stated, "I just wish I could have called home during those first three weeks... I think it would have made a difference... Things were tough and if I had just been able to call my parents, I might have made it through." Thus, the prevailing attitude was one of insufficient personal time and lack of opportunities to develop friendships.

The one respondent who stayed past Beast Barracks had a different attitude. She commented, "I was four years older than

most of the cadets so my social life wasn't all that great, but I did date one cadet. The officers and their wives (sponsors) invited me over a lot and there was always plenty to do."

With the exception of two respondents (a graduate and an enlisted soldier), none of the respondents really knew how to evaluate the military training program. The enlisted person commented that Army Basic Training was far more regimented than Beast. In addition, prep school cadets said West Point was different from the military but the cadets had no vision of what the regular military was like. Generally, the respondents felt military training was too disciplined. One woman stated, "I'm disciplined but not that disciplined... like never moving your head and being silent all the time... I just don't see the purpose."

Another woman said, "Military training as a plebe was okay, but I had problems the next year when I became a leader. As a leader I was never allowed to care for the individual. If I did (talk or counsel with male cadets), it was blown out of proportion or interpreted as something it wasn't. I guess I just wasn't geared to being above the enlisted person."

The respondents felt athletics to be less strenuous than anticipated. Generally, all felt that they were able to handle the athletic requirements. Some found sports extremely challenging. One woman commented, "I never jogged until I went to West Point. I hated it. It was the only thing I couldn't stand. Now that I'm gone I like it." Others remarked, "It wasn't as physically demanding as I thought it would be" or "I was physically prepared and had no problems." Women's attitudes did not differ significantly from the men's attitudes. The woman with medical problems said, "It's so competitive. When I was sick, my own cadre members kept getting on my case because I was slowing them down, but I couldn't do anything

about it. Finally I left and went into the hospital."

The issue of women at the academy elicited different perceptions by the respondents. All respondents felt there to be some amount of tension, but varied in their perceptions of the degree. Some felt that the general attitude of upper-class cadets was that the women were doing well. Yet, these cadets did not really like the idea of women being there. The majority of men felt comfortable with the women's presence. Only a few men actively discriminated against women.

Women said that the tactical officers with women in their companies got hassled by officers who did not have women, often calling them "Pansy Squad" or some such other name. There was great pressure on the part of these officers to have their companies perform well. The tension permeated the lower ranks.

Women respondents mentioned that in most cases discrimination was not open but behind the back in nature. One Black male commented, "I sensed discrimination against the women but couldn't really say what... I just know the squad leaders didn't like them." At one point during Beast when women's morale was suffering, a special meeting was held. One respondent commented, "They had to have the meeting because everybody was suffering so, but they felt guilty doing so." When questioned about upperclass women officer support, one respondent mentioned, "There was no relationship, except for technical aspects, for example, 'How do I hold my gun?'"

Other respondents talked of the women cadets' attitudes about themselves. There is the perception that "girls are there because they have nothing else to do and West Point presents a challenge. Only if there is something else to do

will they leave... Some told me, 'I wish I had the guts to leave but I'm from a military family and have nothing else to go to.'" Another said generally women are very frustrated. "Women who are still there can adapt... They can be cold and distant from people."

In addition, women at West Point undergo a sexual identity crisis in attempting to retain feminine qualities when constantly being told to be a man. Respondents suggested that West Point incorporate more feminine kinds of activities - sports besides lacrosse and basketball. "They should have dancing, without uniforms, so they can feel like they're women."

The decision to separate occurred for most of the cadets interviewed around the third week of Beast. In fact, for all but one respondent the first inkling of doubt appeared during the third week of Beast. The other respondent began to have doubts in November of her second year. All respondents indicated that the process for getting out was as difficult or more difficult than the process for entering West Point. The respondents talked to as many as twelve different persons regarding their decision to resign and the process took from between one week to one month. One respondent commented, "I guess they really wanted to make sure this was your best choice." Most squad leaders encouraged the cadets to stick it out a little while longer, but in some cases later suggested that they follow through with their decision since they were evidently miserable.

The reaction of peers to cadets who resigned ranged from wanting them to stay to supporting the decision to leave. In all cases while the family of the cadets wanted them to stay, they were supportive of the decision to resign.



All of the cadets, with the exception of one, felt their experience at West Point to be worthwhile and harbored no bitterness toward the institution. They were glad they tried and had the opportunity to see for themselves that it was not for them. One respondent commented, "My attitude became so positive after I resigned... I did all my turns perfect... My officer told me I should resign every week."

In addition, all respondents said they would recommend West Point to those who showed a genuine interest. However, there were several stipulations to this statement. First, they would point out both positive and negative aspects of West Point. Second, in the case of women they would make sure that women applicants understood all the implications of being female and a minority in a predominantly male environment. Third, they would encourage the applicants not to go for the glory and prestige, but to try it out to see if it suited them. Last, they would make sure the person was really interested in West Point for himself/herself and not because of parental or other outside pressure.

All respondents had college alternatives outside of West Point and felt they would not have resigned if they knew they had no where else to go. One person said, "I couldn't have left if I knew I didn't have another school available." They all felt very comfortable with the decision to resign. While they had occasional flashbacks of "if I had stayed...", they felt assured they had made the right choice.

Recommendations for West Point recruiting focused on the following:

- Tell them like it is.
- Use actual cadets who will give honest opinions.
- Make sure they understand all the implications of military life and training.
- Get more women so women cadets won't be so lonely.

However, most recommendations centered on recruiting and encompassed various aspects of the fourth class system. The majority of respondents suggested establishing closer unity and more openness between plebes and the upperclass. They felt that the system alienates a lot of good people because of the rigid discipline. Almost all respondents mentioned allowing cadets the privilege of calling home during Beast before the three week privileges period. If there had been an opportunity to establish contact with their families and receive support, they might have stayed.

Suggestions were also made on changing the traditional rules and regulations. For example, now plebes are not required to go to breakfast. The prevailing attitude among all respondents was to allow more time for a private life and opportunities and to develop personal relationships with all personnel in the community.

#### F. Summary

- Awareness of West Point and Decision Process
  - Mutual awareness of West Point occurred prior to high school
  - The nomination's requirement presented the major difficulty in the application process
  - The final determining factor for selecting West Point over competitive institutions was the financial assistance provided
  - Positive influencing agents on the decision to attend West Point included parents, West Point cadets, Army officers, and community publicity
  - West Point representatives interfaced with the applicants frequently and impacted then favorably

- West Point Experience

- Discipline was regarded as excessive
- Physical requirements were less than anticipated
- Some regimentation was regarded as excessive or irrelevant
- Lack of personal time/personal life was a major problem
- Some felt a loss of self-identity
- Comraderie among cadets carried according to company
- Counseling sources were recognized as available, but not utilized either due to stigma attached to seeking help or because of perception that counseling agents still represented the Army
- Response to women's presence was negative but suppressed
- Women underwent a sexual identity crisis

- Separation

- Most decisions to separate occurred around the third week of Beast Barracks
- The process for resigning from the Academy was tedious and difficult
- All had alternatives outside of West Point

- Post-separation

- Drop-outs would recommend West Point to genuinely interested applicants, but would discuss all aspects of cadet life with them
- All drop-outs felt the experience was worthwhile

## DROP-OUT INTERVIEW GUIDE

- I. Introduction
- II. Background Information
  - A. Name, Sex, Race, Marital Status
  - B. Residence
  - C. Year entered (Class); year dropped out
  - D. Affiliation with service prior to association with West Point (or prep. school)
- III. Present Status
  - A. Education (or job) pursuit. Where? How?
  - B. Career goals
  - C. Personal goals
  - D. Satisfaction with present status
- IV. Awareness of West Point
  - A. When heard about
  - B. Information sources (peers, family, counselors, West Point contacts, media, literature)
  - C. Information sought
  - D. Information received (accuracy, helpfulness)
  - E. West Point programs
  - F. Nominations process
- V. Perceptions of Alternatives
  - A. Number and names of institutions considered
  - B. Attributes of institutions considered/Likes and Dislikes
  - C. Relative importance of each
  - D. Comparison of institutions
  - E. Other service academies
  - F. Basis for these perceptions (direct experience, word-of-mouth, literature, etc.)

## F. Budget

1. What percent of budget allocated for minority/  
women recruitment?
2. Is budget sufficient to meet goals?

## G. Recruiting programs for women/Blacks

1. What types of special programs/recruiting  
are used for target markets?
2. How effective are they in terms of:
  - Providing information
  - Meeting special needs
  - Meeting goals
  - Communicating effectively

## H. Retention

1. Overall attrition factor
2. Women/Blacks attrition factor
3. Special programs directed towards women/Blacks  
to assist in retention
4. Rate effectiveness of those programs

## VI. Sources of Influence

- A. Who? Their roles (especially West Point contacts)
- B. What?
- C. Relative importance

## VII. Decision

- A. Schools applied to/accepted at (especially other academies)
- B. First choice, second choice. Why?
- C. West Point ranking. Why?
- D. When made decision
- E. Factors influencing decision (list and priority)
  - Parents' desire
  - Career choice
  - Honor, prestige/social prestige
  - "Free" education
  - Academic reputation
  - Serve country
  - Patriotism
  - Leadership training
  - Physical development
  - Travel/adventure opportunities
  - Assured career
  - Financial security
  - Advancement in service
  - Athletics
  - Challenge
  - New opportunities for women
  - Other
- F. Reactions to decision
  - Peers
  - Counselors
  - Family
  - Others

## VIII. General Experiences at West Point

- A. Anticipations
  - 1. Confidence in meeting standards
    - Academic
    - Athletic
    - Regimentation

- Social
- Military
- Black issues
- Female issues
- Physical stress
- Time demands

2. Basis for these feelings

B. Actual Experience

1. Was it what you expected?
  - Better (specifics)
  - Worse (specifics)
  - Most stressful events/times/aspects
2. Have feelings changed over time and in what ways?
3. Most satisfying experience
4. Least satisfying experience
5. Other disappointments

C. Peers

1. Feelings about classmates, plebes, upperclass cadets in general
2. Opportunities to meet all kinds of people
3. Level of comraderie
4. Reactions to women, minorities

IX. Reactions to Specific Aspects of West Point

A. Counseling/Guidance

1. To whom do you go and for what reason?
2. Type and adequacy of help given--cadets in general, special groups (e.g., women and Blacks)
3. Perceived concern shown by staff toward individual cadets
4. Perceptions of cadets about cadets who seek services
5. Desired changes
6. Satisfaction/dissatisfaction

## B. Academic Programs

1. General satisfaction
2. Comparison with civilian colleges/academies
3. Likes and dislikes with respect to:
  - Variety of courses
  - Quality of instruction
  - Individual instruction
  - Study time
  - Homework
  - Grading
  - Facilities
  - Other
4. Desired changes

## C. Personal/Social Life

1. General satisfaction
2. Facilities/opportunities
3. Comparison with civilian colleges/academies
4. Likes and dislikes
5. Desired changes

## D. Military Training

1. General satisfaction
2. Likes and dislikes with respect to:
  - First summer
  - Fourth class system
  - Honor system
  - Barracks life and indoctrination
  - Military science course exercises
  - Aptitude for service or leadership education system
3. Does system accomplish its purpose?
4. Strengths and weaknesses of system
5. Desired changes



## E. Athletics

1. General satisfaction
2. Facilities/opportunities
3. Comparison with civilian colleges/academies
4. Likes and dislikes with respect to:
  - Facilities
  - Variety of intramural sports
  - Varsity athletics
5. Desired changes
  - Cadets as a whole
  - Special groups (e.g., women)

## X. Decision to Separate

- A. First thoughts about dropping out (circumstances and timing)
- B. Factors involved in decision (rank and priority)
  1. Self-separation or institutional
  2. Academics/athletics/regimentation/fourth class system
  3. Career
  4. Social (racial, sexual, dating, homesickness, etc.)
  5. Financial
  6. Peer pressure
  7. Family pressure
  8. Alternatives available
- C. Feelings and thoughts about separation
- D. Counseling and support sought/received
  1. Peers
  2. Upperclass
  3. Officers (especially Tactical Officers)
  4. Faculty

5. Counseling Center
6. Other West Point personnel
7. Others

E. Reactions to decision

1. Peers
2. Officers
3. Family
4. Others

F. What would have changed decision

XI. Separation Process

- A. Formal process
- B. Any doubts? Anxieties? Regrets?
- C. Perceptions of self worth (is dropping out perceived as failure)
- D. Attitudes toward West Point
  1. In general
  2. For self

XII. Post Separation

- A. Plans
- B. Satisfaction with decision
- C. Any thoughts about returning
- D. Discussions with others
  1. About West Point in general and your decision in particular
  2. Would you recommend West Point? Why? Why not?

XIII. Recommendations

- A. What contributes most to drop out rate?
- B. Are some more acceptable to dropping out?
- C. What would reduce drop out rate?

SECTION VI

DECLINER INTERVIEWS

## DECLINER INTERVIEWS

A. Purpose of Interviews

To identify the key issues in the recruitment and retention of Black Americans and women, Market Facts conducted qualitative research in the form of focus group and in-depth interviews. Such research was conducted with many types of respondents, including the decliners discussed in this report.

Such qualitative research is designed to identify the range of attitudes, opinions and ideas held by a particular type of respondent. The research is not intended to be a quantitative measure of the extent to which such attitudes may exist. Thus, the research should not be considered generalizable.

B. Description of Respondents

In-depth telephone interviews were conducted with five applicants who had declined an appointment to West Point for the Class of 1985. The respondents were freshmen attending public and private universities. The group included one white woman, two Black women and two Black men. All but one respondent had relatives associated with some branch of the service (Army, Navy and Marines). All were full-time students, and two of the respondents work part-time. Three had ROTC scholarships.

The universities attended by these respondents included Temple, Pennsylvania State, Harvard and Emory. The respondents majors included the sciences, law, engineering and physics.

### C. Awareness of West Point

While most respondents became aware of West Point at an early age, serious consideration of attending did not occur until the junior or senior year in high school. First contacts evolved from the SAT/ACT searches and, in one case, from viewing the movie "Women at West Point" on television. Applicants generally felt the information received to be adequate and accurate. They thought that the application process involved a lot of paperwork, but felt that the process was systematic. They didn't mind the effort. One applicant said the Physical Aptitude Exam was "kind of fun." Another commented that there was a "heck of a lot of traveling involved," not only for the medical and physical aptitude exams but for interviews with members of Congress as well.

The only real problem in the applications process occurred with the nominations. When time deadlines passed, some applicants felt that they stood no chance and, therefore, lost interest.

Applicants to West Point also applied to and were accepted by three or more other institutions, including the following:

- U.S. Air Force Academy
- Arizona State University
- Boston University
- Cornell University
- Dartmouth College
- Emory University
- Georgia Tech
- Georgetown University
- Harvard University

- U.S. Naval Academy
- Pennsylvania State University
- Princeton University
- Temple University
- University of Kentucky
- University of Texas
- Virginia Tech
- Yale

In all cases West Point was either the second or third choice. The other institutions were selected because of the reputations of their departmental programs for specific majors and because of their prestige.

D. Decision Process

There appeared to be a significant difference in the amount of outside influence exerted on the decliners, and the drop-outs interviewed. While some decliners insisted that the decision had been their own, others replied, "My Parents didn't think I could make it" or "My friends thought I was weird." In addition, relatives in the services seemed to have a strong impact on the decision not to attend. The influence was characterized either by observation of their behavior and lifestyles or by talking. Counselors varied in their perceptions of the Academy and of the students' ability to succeed.

In order of priority, the basic criteria used to compare the alternative institutions revolved around:

- 1) Strength of department
- 2) Size of school and student-teacher ratio
- 3) Reputation

- 4) Future job placement
- 5) Geographic location

Most of the applicants interviewed had visited West Point and had an opportunity to assess the environment. Unfortunately, the visit was in most cases the deciding factor not to attend West Point. Some felt overwhelmed by the regimented environment, the sacrifices that had to be made, the lack of personal freedom, and the routine daily lives that they saw cadets leading.

West Point was regarded positively in the following areas:

- Academic excellence
- Promising future
- Excellent financial package
- New facilities

However negative perceptions were related with respect to:

- Five-year commitment after graduation
- Sacrifices that had to be made (daily life and personal freedom)
- No majors
- Admission of lower calibre minority students

E. Summary

The following summarize attitudes and perceptions of decliners relating to West Point:

- Awareness of West Point
  - Most applicants became aware of West Point at an early age through family members and friends
  - Parents, relatives and friends influenced the applicants negatively towards attending West Point
  - Positive factors influencing the applicant to attend West Point include: quality education, financial package, promising future graduation
  - Negative factors influencing the applicant not to attend West Point include: 5-year commitment, lack of majors, regimentation and lack of freedom
- Choice of College/University
  - Attributes used to evaluate the institutions include
    - Reputation of department
    - Student teacher ratio
    - Prestige
    - Future job placement statistics
    - Location
  - Three of the five students interviewed presently preferred institution under an ROTC scholarship



## DECLINER INTERVIEW GUIDE

VI-7

- I. Introduction
- II. Background Information
  - A. Name/sex/race/residence
  - B. Service affiliation
  - C. Educational status at time of USMA appointment
  - D. Current status (student, employed, other)
- III. Awareness of West Point
  - A. When heard about
  - B. Information sources (peers, family, counselors, West Point contacts, media, literature)
  - C. Information sought
  - D. Information received (accuracy, helpfulness)
  - E. West Point programs
  - F. Nominations process
- IV. Perceptions of Alternatives
  - A. Number and names of institutions considered
  - B. Attributes of institutions considered/Likes and dislikes
  - C. Relative importance of each
  - D. Comparison of institutions
  - E. Other service academies
  - F. Basis for these perceptions (direct experience, word-of-mouth, literature, etc.)
- V. Sources of Influence
  - A. Who? Their roles (especially West Point contacts)
  - B. What?
  - C. Relative importance

## VI. Decision

- A. Schools applied to/accepted at (especially other academies)
- B. First choice, second choice. Why?
- C. West Point ranking. Why?
- D. When made decision to decline?
- E. Factors influencing decision (list and priority)
- F. Reactions to decision
  - Peers
  - Counselors
  - Family
  - Others
- G. Post decision
  - Any doubts
  - Anything to reaffirm?
  - Would do again? Why/why not?
  - What would change decision?

SECTION VII

LIAISON OFFICER INTERVIEWS

## LIAISON OFFICER INTERVIEWS

A. Purpose of Interviews

To identify the key issues in the recruitment and retention of Black Americans and women, Market Facts conducted qualitative research in the form of focus groups and in-depth interviews. Such research was conducted with many types of respondents, including the West Point liaison officers discussed in this summary report.

Such qualitative research is designed to identify the range of attitudes, opinions and ideas held by a particular type of respondent. The research is not intended to be a quantitative measure of the extent to which such attitudes may exist. Thus, the research should not be considered generalizable.

B. Description of Respondents

In-depth interviews were conducted with five liaison officers. (The interview guide is included in this section.) All were Army reserve officers; one was a West Point graduate. The geographical areas represented included Arkansas, Atlanta, Chicago and Houston. All officers had served in the liaison capacity for a period of at least four years, sometimes extending up to seven or eight years. They had a wealth of knowledge and experience relative to recruiting for West Point. All officers indicated that they derived a great amount of personal satisfaction from serving in this capacity and had every intention of continuing to do so in the future.

C. Responsibilities

The liaison officers perceived their efforts to be voluntary and indicated that the \$400 to \$500 per year or retirement benefit was incidental. As full-time business-

people, they felt that the essential ingredient in being a good officer was exemplified by the very nature of being in the program and having a commitment to doing the job. Most of the officers assumed responsibility for 20 to 60 high schools and spent approximately 8 to 12 hours each week in recruiting efforts.

The liaison officers said primary responsibilities involve recruiting and counseling on an individual basis or in small discussion groups. However, identification of prospective applicants required meetings with counselors, coordinating annual workshops, and participating in local college fairs and college/career nights. In addition, some performed public relations functions by attending state conventions for counselors or admissions officers. In these cases, the officers' primary objective was reminding counselors of opportunities at West Point and establishing relationships with high school personnel (i.e., "send the kids my way when I send you a letter").

The functional components of recruiting students included interviewing, qualifying, making referrals and following up, and submitting periodic status reports. In some cases, officers coordinated efforts of alumni groups and special recruiting programs (i.e., Thanksgiving and Spring Break programs for minorities/women). Others interfaced substantially with the Congressional delegation process.

All liaison officers felt that communications with the West Point Admissions office were both adequate and efficient. The training films were considered extremely helpful.

Most officers felt that the initial training was sufficient because there was not that much to learn. They viewed the Admissions Office as responsible primarily for providing them with a speedy evaluation and review of the candidate's qualifications.

Their biggest problem arose in keeping abreast of current changes in administrative policies. Yet they felt that West Point did an excellent job in informing them of such changes. All felt that the Admissions Office "bent over backwards" to help them.

D. Relationships with Counselors

The officers talked about their relationships with high school guidance counselors. The officers said that many of the people in today's counseling ranks are products of the Vietnam era and promote their anti-military sentiment to the students. Generally, students' attitudes have improved in this respect, but many counselors still feel the same. One officer felt this situation was likely to intensify as these personnel advance to the top rung of counseling. Since the counselors' cooperation is so vitally important in recruiting, officers felt more communications should be directed to counselors. These communications should raise the level of awareness of counselors regarding West Point opportunities and remind counselors that their responsibility is to help the student achieve his or her destiny. The officers suggested increasing one-on-one contact with counselors, increasing counselor visits to West Point, and providing free luncheon meetings for counselors in school districts to inform them of West Point opportunities.

One officer described counselors as somewhat uncommitted. He attributed the problem to the fact that many counselors are former teachers who became tired of teaching and who have a very low level of genuine interest in the students' future. Furthermore, he was shocked to find that many counselors are unaware of West Point's geographical location, let alone its programs and benefits. The counselors had the same misconceptions as students about entrance requirements and procedures and the program curriculum. All officers felt more attention should be directed toward these counselors in promoting a higher level of

awareness and developing a more positive image.

E. Relationship with Alumni

One of the problems mentioned by the liaison officers was the use of alumni in recruiting, especially in qualifying candidates. Generally, the liaison officers considered alumni extremely helpful and excellent sources of information and influence. However, one officer pointed out, "There is a risk of having the graduate evaluate the student on the way West Point was when 'he' was there." This problem was considered to be an increasing one, because West Point programs have changed considerably over the years.

F. Recruiting Styles

Liaison officers varied widely in their approaches to recruiting but for the most part emphasized the quality education and leadership development opportunities. Some stressed the need to convey career opportunities both within the Army and in civilian life. Several indicated the competitive advantages (i.e., free education, on-the-job experience) to be their focal point.

Quality education was defined as allowing the student to learn not only academically, but also to develop one's skills and broaden one's horizons. Most liaison officers stressed the educational rather than the military aspects of cadet life, because they found that the military turned students off. While students' anti-military sentiments had subsided somewhat, liaison officers still preferred not to emphasize this area. One officer said, "I seldom say anything about the military. I emphasize that West Point is another school of higher learning." Another respondent indicated that several years ago liaison officers were instructed not to wear uniforms, but civilian clothing when recruiting. Only one officer (working in the South)

felt no concern with the military emphasis. He stressed that the actual military education was conducted during the summers and felt most students are surprised to learn how few military courses are actually required.

Promoting West Point's leadership development also presented some problems. The students' understanding of leadership varies according to the amount of exposure to which the student is accustomed. Students residing in districts with a professional orientation possess the ability to comprehend this concept more so than others. In cases where students have trouble understanding leadership development, liaison officers described the program in various ways; including developing the ability to cope with stress. One liaison likened leadership to the baseball team manager Sparky Anderson, who in essence builds the team ... "They do understand that."

Career opportunities were stressed again and again as the primary concern of students relative to military and civilian life. In some areas West Point graduates provided the best resources in this area. "The relationship of going from a quality education at West Point to successful careers must be stressed more," commented one officer. "In my community, the graduates are very active in recruiting and serve as splendid examples of successful careerists, whether they are in business, the financial field or medicine.

Junior ROTC programs are not viewed as good recruiting opportunities. Junior ROTC is viewed as just another extra-curricular high school activity, along with language clubs and bands. In other words, junior ROTC is not viewed as a military activity. The liaison officer represents just another person in a uniform.

The major limitation relates to the quality of the junior ROTC participants. Women are typically not found in the ROTC classes, and junior ROTC cadets are generally not as qualified



academically. A better cross-section of students is found in a broader audience. Thus, while ROTC classes are worthy of some interest, they do not provide a major pool.

Secondly, counselors assume the majority of responsibility in both identifying qualified candidates and in some cases encouraging them to attend the meetings.

Generally, officers felt students had low levels of awareness about the cost of education at West Point and the academic curriculum. In most cases students were either turned off or at the least very skeptical of the five-year commitment.

#### G. Recruiting Women and Blacks

While women's questions are basically the same as the men's, they are more concerned about the "what after graduation" issue. "They say 'I'll be 26-27 when I finally get out...What will I do then?' They know combat arms are out...We can't tell them exactly what they'll be doing during their five-year stint", reported one officer. Another commented, "Not that many women are interested in the military as a career, but the education is okay...I don't know if we'll ever be able to sell them on the glories of the military, but they are convinced there is a commitment."

Liaison officers often find them handicapped in recruiting specifically for women. As a rule few women respond to invitations to attend meetings. One officer estimated the ratio of men to women to be as high as 40 to 1. While he hoped for at least two women from every school, he found himself getting merely three or four as a total from combined schools. However, the women who did attend responded more positively to women cadets with whom they spoke.

Military aspects of the Academy were de-emphasized because in most cases students responded negatively.

Liaison officers found the following problems to be deterrents to successful recruiting:

- Counselors
  - evoke anti-military sentiment
  - lack of commitment to fulfilling responsibilities
  - lack of awareness of West Point programs, benefits, admissions requirements
- Inadequate minority/women representation at West Point program meetings
- Tendency of high school counselors to steer liaison officers to Junior ROTC classes

The students generally exhibited low levels of awareness regarding:

- Cost of West Point education
- Academic curriculum
- Leadership development opportunities

Women specifically asked more questions about careers in the Army and after the Army.

Black representatives served as the most effective recruiters for Black students. The same held true for women.

Liaison officers considered the visual communicators to be reasonably effective. Some felt an underrepresentation of Blacks in the films. Others felt more in the way of social interaction at the Academy should be addressed.

Black women, on the average, appeared to be as cautious towards the idea of the military as a career as did Black men. Black cadets were the best selling agents for both Black men and women. Some officers recommended, however, that white representatives be included at meetings with Black students to convey a genuine commitment on the part of all West Point personnel to recruiting Blacks.

#### H. Recruiting Materials

All liaison officers felt that visual communications media forms were reasonably effective and used the films extensively in the discussion groups. The two most widely used films were "Duty, Honor, Country" and "Professional Leadership." None had viewed the minority recruiting film. Some felt such a film might detract from the emphasis on integration. They suggested using more Blacks and women in films for all audiences to promote West Point's commitment to recruiting Blacks and women. Films were generally viewed as being more effective than slide presentations. Concerns not addressed in the film that generated subsequent discussion revolved around cost requirements and social life opportunities.

Written communications (i.e., brochures, pamphlets, booklets) were considered to be adequate and effective. One officer suggested developing a flashy three-minute reading piece with a mail-back card focusing on the qualifications needed to enter West Point. This piece would be similar to the Pass Guides currently used, but not as comprehensive.

## I. Summary

Liaison officers perform a variety of duties including the following:

- Recruiting
  - Identifying prospective candidates
  - Interviewing candidates
  - Qualifying candidates
  - Referring candidates
- Coordinating
  - Meetings with counselors
  - Organizing discussion groups at high schools
  - Organizing annual workshops
  - Organizing special recruiting programs
  - Interfacing with alumni
- Promoting Public Relations
  - Participating in state conventions of counselors/ admissions officers

The effort expended to fulfill these responsibilities necessitated substantial man-hours, but all officers felt a real commitment to the job. Furthermore, they derived a great deal of satisfaction from performing these tasks. They perceived West Point administration as being very appreciative of their efforts and found no problems in communicating with the staff.

The liaison officers' approach to recruiting varied but several features were always emphasized. They include:

- Quality education
- Free tuition
- Leadership development

The officers appeared to be doing a fine job of recruiting. However, they all indicated that more field personnel are needed.

## LIAISON OFFICER DISCUSSION GUIDELINE

## I. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- A. Name
- B. Title
- C. Present status
  - Military
  - Civilian
  - Reserves
- D. Graduate of West Point?
- E. Length of time served as liaison officer?  
Plans to continue?

## II. ORGANIZATION

- A. Organizational structure
  - 1. How do you function within Admissions Office?
  - 2. To whom are you directly responsible?
  - 3. How are officers selected?

## III. RECRUITING TASKS

- A. Liaison officer responsibilities
  - 1. What is your purpose?
  - 2. Which take highest priority?
    - Providing information
    - Selling West Point
    - Qualifying candidates
    - Identifying candidates

## B. West Point responsibilities

1. Providing literature
2. Identifying candidates
3. Identifying specific problems, concerns

## C. Recruiting methods

1. Quantify amount of interaction with students, parents, high school counselors
2. Coordination of special functions (career day, college presentations, etc.)

## D. Evaluation

1. How is effectiveness evaluated? By individual?  
By group?
2. Who evaluates performance of individual or of group?
3. What measures are taken to ensure consistency, efficient performance?
4. What makes good/bad liaison officer?

## E. Like/dislike

1. What like best about liaison officer role?
2. Like least?

## IV. RECRUITING EFFECTIVENESS

## A. Communications

1. Are communications (written and other) with West Point adequate?
2. How can communications be improved? Priorities?
3. In what areas do you feel inadequately prepared to deal with candidates?
4. Does the Admissions Office respond quickly and efficiently to liaison officer concerns and needs? If not, give examples.

## B. Recruiting techniques

1. Which are most effective? Why?
2. Which are least effective? Why?
3. Which techniques impact parents the most?  
Guidance counselors? Students? Blacks? Women?

## C. Media

1. Are media alternatives effective?
  - Brochures, pamphlets, print literature
  - Films
  - Slide presentation
2. Which are most effective? Why?
3. Which are least effective? Why?
4. Which alternatives influence parents the most?  
Students? Guidance counselors? Blacks? Women?
5. Which do you prefer to use? Why?

## D. Blacks/Women

1. Are special needs/concerns of Blacks and women being met from a recruiting perspective?
2. What distinctive characteristics distinguish recruiting for Blacks and women from other groups?

## V. Recommendations

## A. Blacks

## B. Women

## C. References (other liaison officers, recruiters)



SECTION VIII

COMPETITIVE ADMISSIONS INTERVIEWS

## COMPETITIVE ADMISSIONS INTERVIEWS

A. Purpose of Interviews

To identify the key issues in the recruitment and retention of Black Americans and women, Market Facts conducted qualitative research in the form of focus groups and in-depth interviews. Such research was conducted with many types of respondents, including the admissions officers of competitive institutions discussed in this summary report.

Such qualitative research is designed to identify the range of attitudes, opinions and ideas held by a particular type of respondent. The research is not intended to be a quantitative measure of the extent to which such attitudes may exist. Thus, the research should not be considered generalizable.

B. Description of Respondents

In-depth interviews were conducted with admissions personnel from five competitive institutions:

- California Institute of Technology
- Cornell University
- Massachusetts Institute of Technology
- Ohio State University
- Stanford University

These interviews were conducted to provide a comparative analysis of various admissions procedures, programs and recruiting methods. An outline used to guide the interview is included following this report.

C. Enrollment

The following table indicates the number of undergraduate students at each institution and the corresponding percentages of both Blacks and women in the population.

Table 1

	<u>Total Undergraduate Population</u>	<u>% Of Black</u>	<u>% Of Women</u>
Cal Tech	800	5%	16.5%
Cornell	12,000	10%	40%
MIT	4,600	5%	20%
Ohio State	49,000	5%	~50%
Stanford	12,000	~2%	

With the exception of Ohio State, which had 35 admissions personnel, the admissions personnel numbered from 8 to 12 full-time employees.

In addition, only Stanford and Ohio State had minority divisions within the central office. In all other cases, all personnel were responsible for recruiting minority and majority students.

Cornell and Ohio State both had decentralized offices. Each college within Cornell had its own admissions department and assumed full responsibility for admissions. The central office provided overall direction and support services. Each of the 17 colleges within Ohio State also maintained its own admissions department but interfaced more actively with the central admissions office for administrative and financial support (grants, scholarships, etc.).

All of the institutions used alumni to a limited extent. MIT had sustained the most intensive alumni recruiting program, using approximately 1,400 personnel (educational counselors) as interviewers for all freshmen in the selective process and as recruiters at local college fairs. Cal Tech alumni served as speakers in math and science classes at high schools in designated areas. In all cases alumni were volunteers who underwent no selective process, and who were exposed to minimal training. While Ohio State alumni were not involved to a great extent in recruiting efforts, they did participate in development (primarily scholarship support).

None of the institutions set specific goals for the recruitment of Blacks or women. Some specifically indicated opposing the idea of recruiting "numbers" of a specific group. MIT indicated its number of entering Black freshmen fluctuates each year; the past three years showed the following:

1980	62 Blacks
1979	80 Blacks
1978	70 Blacks

With respect to identifying students, all institutions used the ACT and other minority search lists. Feeder schools were used by all but Cal Tech. Due to the highly specialized nature of their programs, admissions personnel felt that visiting high schools more than once every two to three years was unprofitable.

MIT used the search as a starting point but felt that identification through personal contact ("getting out there and really hustling to get students up here") was the most effective method. With the exception of Ohio State, none of the institutions formally used political or social networks for identifying students.

D. Retention

Retention varied from school to school. The following table represents the retention rates for whites, Blacks and women where documented.

	<u>Whites</u>	<u>Blacks</u>	<u>Women</u>
Cal Tech	70%	--	>70%
Cornell	80%	70%	--
MIT	72%	74%	--
Ohio State	79%	--	--
Stanford	--	--	--

Cal Tech has a "leave" program -- students have the option of taking time off from school. Of those that leave, one-half return to complete their degrees. Students generally leave to decide whether they want to pursue such a heavy science curriculum or get a more general liberal arts program.

E. Racial and Sexist Issues

None of the schools, except for MIT and Ohio State, had strong minority or women support services. MIT retains an Office of Minority Education on a half-million dollar/year budget. The office basically provides academic support and monitors academic progress. In addition, MIT has a Black Student Union, a Black Faculty and Staff support group, and minority advisors within the Dean's Office to provide academic support.

The students at Cal Tech all live in seven houses (women live in all seven) and have a more or less built-in communal support structure. Minorities tend to live together in one house.

Ohio State listed the following as competitive advantages:

- Ohio State is the forefront in graduate and professional education.
- Demonstrates a substantial minority presence of not only students but Black faculty, staff and administrators.
- Provides numerous scholarships, grants and fellowships. Operates under the principle of "no cash - no commitment".
- Offers strong minority supportive services.
  - The Counseling and Consultation Office has three Black psychologists.
  - 50 Black student organizations.
  - Office of Development Education provides tutoring, peer counseling, academic counseling with a 1 to 85 ratio of counselors to Black students compared to a 1 to 200 ratio overall.
- Ohio State is an urban university located in the heart of Columbus. The student has the option of participating in numerous community organizations (i.e., 200 Black churches, other social and political groups).

Most special recruiting programs for women or Blacks involve high school contact or participation in career days and college nights. Cal Tech sponsors a program in conjunction with Ford and IBM six weeks before the fall term. Women are invited to the campus for three days and are informed about academic curriculums. Special concerns of women are addressed. Since Cal Tech has been co-ed for only eight years, some problems still exist, but for the most part, women are accepted on an equal basis. MIT has a special Thanksgiving program in which students recruit in their home towns. The other institutions use primarily the recruiting methods discussed earlier (i.e., feeder school, searches, etc.) for both majority and minority groups.

The Office of Minority Affairs at Ohio State University provides many support services, including:

- A freshman foundation program in which 600 students are given a complete financial package worth \$4,000 per student.
- Program development in which proposals for federal funding agencies are designed.
- Special programs which provide support services (financial and administrative) for art, lecture, art exhibit, and film series.
- Support for the 50 minority student organizations on campus.
- Financial assistance for students attending national conventions.
- Minority newspapers, magazines, brochures and calendars.

F. Competitive Advantages

Each institutions possessed unique traits. Cornell has the advantage of being considered an Ivy League school; prestige is its major selling point in addition to its academic programs. In addition, Cornell is half public and half private; thus the cost factor for New York residents is substantially reduced.

MIT does not believe in a "hard-sell" approach. The institution stresses its academic strength curriculum flexibility. Furthermore, MIT emphasizes that it represents a school where "you don't have to read about new research, but can actively participate in new research with professors, faculty, etc." MIT's strongest competitors were Harvard and Cal Tech. Cal Tech felt its competition was represented by the engineering and science institutions. However, Cal Tech felt that its programs were so distinctive and specialized that there was no real competition.

Only Cal Tech and Ohio State use special communications directed at the target groups. Cal Tech has a pamphlet designed for women, and Ohio State has numerous material designed specifically for minority groups.

G. Summary

The institutions reviewed differed significantly in size. Thus the organizational structures and functions of their admissions offices, support services, and their approaches to recruiting varied tremendously. Undergraduate populations ranged from 800 to 49,000. The distributions of Blacks and women fluctuated between 2-10% and 16-50%, respectively. Admissions office personnel varied in size, but most of the institutions sustained from 8-12 full-time officers. The larger institutions had decentralized admissions offices and provided over-all direction and support services for the satellite offices.

Alumni served as volunteers in the following functions:

- Interviewing candidates
- Recruiting Referral
- Promoting public relations by participating as speakers/lecturers in high school classes
- Soliciting funds for scholarship support

None of the alumni received extensive training.

None of the stitutions set specific goals for recruiting minorities or women and some strongly opposed the idea. Most appeared to be satisfied with the numbers of minorities/women that they enrolled.

Feeder schools and minority search programs were the primary means for identifying students. Recruiting techniques fluctuated from using mail-outs and self-selection to active personal recruiting.



Retention rates were generally high and no specific efforts were directed towards reducing attrition, with the exception of Ohio State. They maintained a comprehensive support service program for minorities.

None of the institutions relied on a hard-sell approach to recruiting but each felt it possessed unique strengths that differentiated it from the other competitive institutions.

ADMISSIONS DISCUSSION GUIDELINE

## I. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- A. Institution
- B. Interviewee name/title
- C. Length of time with institution
- D. Size of institution
  - Percentage of Black/women undergraduate students (entering, graduating)

## II. ADMISSIONS OFFICE

- A. Organizational structure
  - 1. Size of office (technical)
  - 2. Organizational chart
  - 3. Responsibilities of key members
  - 4. Use of outside personnel (alumni, others)
    - To whom do they report?
    - How effective are they?
    - Training aspects
    - Communication
- B. Goal setting
  - 1. Are goals set for minority/women recruiting? How By whom?
  - 2. How is goal achievement monitored? By whom?
- C. Identification of Blacks/women
  - 1. Sources
    - Feeder high schools
    - ACT Search
    - Political/social organizations
    - Other
  - 2. How would you rank these sources in terms of providing useful leads?
- D. Admissions criteria
  - 1. General qualification standards
  - 2. Relevant importance of criteria
  - 3. Ability to meet sub-group goals by using standard measures
  - 4. Special considerations for women/Blacks
- E. Competitive position
  - 1. Why do Blacks/women enroll?
    - Financial
    - Major
    - Athletics
    - Social
    - Other
  - 2. West Point comparison

## F. Budget

1. What percent of budget allocated for minority/  
women recruitment?
2. Is budget sufficient to meet goals?

## G. Recruiting programs for women/Blacks

1. What types of special programs/recruiting  
are used for target markets?
2. How effective are they in terms of:
  - Providing information
  - Meeting special needs
  - Meeting goals
  - Communicating effectively

## H. Retention

1. Overall attrition factor
2. Women/Blacks attrition factor
3. Special programs directed towards women/Blacks  
to assist in retention
4. Rate effectiveness of those programs